

SERIOUSLY, WHAT ARE THEY READING?
AN ANALYSIS OF KOREAN CHILDREN'S READING BEHAVIOR REGARDING
EDUCATIONAL GRAPHIC NOVELS

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a qualitative study that analyzes diverse views on the popularity of Educational Graphic Novels (EGNs) in Korea and children's use of this medium. In order to elicit voices of children who are the main readers of EGNs, in-depth focus group interviews were conducted with fourteen Korean children ages seven to eleven. Interviews with teachers and librarians who work with children, observations at an elementary school and a public library, and content analysis of selected EGNs were also conducted. Based on the transcripts and reflective notes from the interviews, field notes from the observations, and the content of the three selected EGNs, this study investigates the reasons for popularity and patterns of children's use of EGNs.

Analyses revealed that most Korean children read EGNs primarily for fun, not to learn information. Although the EGNs consist of both entertaining and educational elements, children easily picked out and enjoyed only the fun parts, while ignoring the information parts. There was barely any gender difference in children's passion for EGNs, but some differences existed in how girls and boys responded to certain elements of the EGNs – the boys responded to violent illustrations more than girls did and the girls responded to the subject of romance and were attracted by a strong as well as smart and pretty female character. Many children indicated that their enthusiasm for EGNs came from the humor in the books. Violence, verbal humor, slapstick humor and toilet humor were the focus group children's favorite types of humor in EGNs. Generally, teachers and librarians had critical views of EGNs. The biggest concern was that EGNs would make children lose interest in reading regular children's books. However, the focus group interviews and observations reflected that children like to read regular children's books as well, regardless of their passion for EGNs. This study also indicated that Korean children are

familiar with media intertextuality. The focus group children demonstrated that they are skillful users of diverse media, by crossing boundaries between texts and media formats that originated from the EGNs.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On April 28, 2007 a group of people who were concerned about children's comic book reading gathered at Dongdaemun-gu Public Library in Seoul, Korea, for a panel discussion called *What Shall We Do about Comic Books¹ in Libraries?* The panels included two comics artists, two public librarians, and two citizen representatives. The two librarians were Ra Gyeong-Rae, a children's librarian in Dongdaemun-gu Public Library and Cho Jae-Hak, a librarian of the National Library for Children and Young Adults. The two citizens represented the Friends of the Library and a parent group. It was the first official panel discussion about comics to be initiated by a public library in South Korea which indicates that librarians were beginning to seriously consider comics as one kind of library collection. Ra Gyeong-Rae², a public librarian in Dongdaemun-gu Public Library, said that the symposium was initiated because Dongdaemun-gu Public Library recently had been "losing control" in dealing with comic book collection management, particularly the Educational Graphic Novels collection (personal communication, July 19, 2007).

According to an article published in Korean Library Association Journal, when elementary schools dismissed class each afternoon, huge numbers of children literally ran into the library to read Educational Graphic Novels. This led to other patrons' complaints and the

¹ Although there are slight differences between the terms comics, comic books, and graphic novels, I use them interchangeably in this paper. I will discuss these terms further and explain why I use them interchangeably, in the next chapter.

² Traditional order of Korean names places the family name first followed by the given name. In this case, Ra is the family name and Gyeong-Rae is the given name of this person. I will follow this traditional order when indicating Korean names in this paper.

children's librarians could barely calm down the noisy children in the library, which seemed more like a crowded marketplace. As a temporary solution the children's librarians sorted out the most popular EGNs (250 titles) and placed them on a separate bookshelf in the children's library so that the EGN readers did not disturb other library users. However, the congestion did not stop. Moreover, the 250 EGNs quickly became seriously damaged because of frequent use. The librarians collected those damaged EGNs, put them in a non-circulating closed stack, and withheld the use of them saying they were "being repaired."³ After this process, reference questions about EGNs – mostly searching for the missing books – greatly increased both at the reference desk and at the library website. Still, 60% of the 100 most circulated children's books at Dongdaemun-gu Public Library were Educational Graphic Novels, even without the 250 removed books⁴ (Ra, 2007a; 2007b).

This is not just a unique situation in a particular library in Korea⁵. Since 2000 most public libraries in Korea have experienced similar situations. For example, the National Library for Children & Young Adults places most popular EGNs in the archive, which is a closed stack. A formal request form is needed in order to check out a book from the archive, but is restricted to in-library use (Song, 2009). Cho Jae-Hak, a librarian of the National Library for Children and Young Adults, says that despite this "complicated process," some children go directly to the archive and enjoy reading EGNs (personal communication, July 6, 2007).

³ The books were not really being repaired. They were not replaced with new copies, either. What the librarians did was physically remove the 250 EGNs from the library collection.

⁴ At that time, Dongdaemun-gu Public Library had about 18,000 children's books; only 7% of them (about 1,000 books) were Educational Graphic Novels (Ra, 2007).

⁵ In this dissertation I use "Korea" to refer to the nation-state that is formally recognized as both the Republic of Korea and South Korea. While I recognize North Korea as part of Korean geography and Korean cultural consciousness, it is not a major player in the context of my work. When denoting North Korea, I will specifically say "North Korea" or the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

In 2007, I did an independent study investigating library services for youth in Korean children's libraries (Lim, 2007). I was particularly interested in the management of Educational Graphic Novels collections. Educational Graphic Novels are recognized as an independent genre in Korea because of the nature of their content: these works focus on "educational" materials such as history, science, and other information areas. The Educational Graphic Novels market has greatly increased since 2000. For this research I visited nine children's libraries and observed the children in the libraries. I also interviewed nine children's librarians and asked how they dealt with EGN collection management. Overall the librarians were very critical of EGNs but had various policies to deal with EGNs. Some had their own selection criteria and some simply acquired copies of all new EGNs. One interesting librarian confessed that he hid what he perceived to be lower quality EGNs on a different shelf – but he also said children are very good at finding them, just like playing hide-and-seek (Cha Byung-Chul, personal communication, July 13, 2009). Although each librarian had devised his or her own method to deal with the "problem" of EGNs, they all agreed on one thing: children love to read Educational Graphic Novels.

A recent survey identified 50 bestselling children's books at Kyobo Bookstore – the biggest bookstore in Korea – during the years 2003 to 2008.⁶ This survey reveals that 5 books in the top 10 list were EGNs and 17 books in the top 50 list were EGNs (Lee, J., 2009). Despite this great popularity of EGNs, however, children's literature experts are critical of this genre.

According to the 2009 Recommended Children's Book List issued by the Happy Morning Reading Association (2009), only 5 books⁷ among a total of 389 books were EGNs. The recommended book list published by the Happy Morning Association is one of the most

⁶ This survey is based on the sales database. Kyobo Bookstore established the statistics program at the end of 2002. Therefore, the researcher could only gain the information of bestsellers from 2003 onward (Lee, J., 2009).

⁷ They are *Into The History Shong Shong 1, 2, 3* (2008); *So This Word Came 1* (2008); *So This Word Came 2* (2008). These EGNs are more like textbooks than pleasure reading, and young readers find them less attractive than popular EGNs.

referenced resources by librarians and teachers in Korea. Han Sang-Su, the president of this Association, is a former children's book editor and former children's library director. He has been concentrating on running this organization since 2004, with a staff of 7 people. The primary goal of the Happy Morning Reading Association is to advocate 10 minutes or more of morning reading time in every school in Korea. Since 2005, because of their efforts, many schools in Korea require morning readings in every classroom. Currently 2,021 schools⁸ are participating in this movement (toastbook, 2008).

My goal is to determine the reasons and patterns of use of the recent popularity of Educational Graphic Novels in Korea: (1) Are Educational Graphic Novels really educational and entertaining at the same time?; (2) Is Educational Graphic Novel reading regarded as "real" reading⁹?; (3) Can we evaluate children's reading of Educational Graphic Novels in terms of standards for traditional literacy?

In addressing these questions, I seek to provide informed guidelines to those who work with children's reading education, such as children's librarians, teachers, and educators.

Research Questions and Significance

Kang Hyun-Ju and Jeong Hyun-Sun¹⁰ indicate that Educational Graphic Novels are a somewhat problematic medium because most parents and teachers have simultaneous and conflicting positive and negative opinions. EGNs are positively valued because of their

⁸ This is about 10% of all schools in Korea. According to Korean Educational Development Institute, there are 19,625 schools in Korea (2010).

⁹ According to Newkirk, adults who work with children often "create a hierarchy of texts" and consider only certain genres and forms as "real" reading (as cited in Ross, McKechnie, & Rothbauer, 2006, p. 90). Genres and forms that are not considered as serious reading in general include comics, graphic novels, teen romance novels, magazines, newspapers, and Web sites (Krashen, 2004, pp. 92-114; Ross et al., 2006, pp. 90, 102). Ross et al. insist that rethinking "what counts as reading" is necessary (2006, p. 90).

¹⁰ Kang Hyun-Ju is an elementary school teacher and Jeong Hyun-Sun is a professor at the Department of Korean Language Education in Gyeongin National University of Education.

educational purpose to convey useful knowledge to children in easy and interesting ways; on the other hand, EGNs are also negatively viewed because they may discourage reading more traditionally formatted books and prevent children from having a serious approach to knowledge (2009, p. 164). My research questions arise from these contradictory viewpoints about EGNs. I am curious to understand the diverse views on the EGN phenomenon and to know the complicated social and educational relationships surrounding this medium. I am also interested in exploring the prejudice – both positive and negative – associated with EGNs, particularly from a new literacy perspective. My doctoral research will attempt to address the following research questions.

(1) Are Educational Graphic Novels really educational and entertaining at the same time?

I am curious as to whether or not children actually take the middle stance on the efferent/aesthetic continuum when they read EGNs, as argued by EGN creators and publishers. Many EGN artists seem to be proud of creating books that contribute to increasing children's knowledge and promoting learning¹¹ (Lee, B., 2005, p. 31; Lee, W., 2005, p. 33). However, what is really happening in the field appears to be different. When I interviewed children's librarians in Korea for my independent study in 2007, the librarians did not see them as educational, but rather as entertaining, despite the fact that they are called EGNs. When I asked the librarians about their opinions on EGNs, most started the sentence with "Well, I know there may be some merits, but ..."; they thought EGNs "may be" somewhat educational, but no more than that. Moreover, when I visited the Bucheon Comics Library in 2007, I was amazed to find out that most of the children in the library were reading Educational Graphic Novels while they had so

¹¹ Lee Bum-Ki, who is a former general comic book artist and now an EGN artist, insists he is very gratified that he contributes to children's education. He says this satisfaction is different from what he felt when he drew general comic books (2005, p. 31).

many other choices of general comic books. Also, when I attended the Seoul International Book Fair in 2005, 2006 and 2007, I observed crowds of children sitting on the floor and concentrating on EGN reading. To my eyes, those children looked like they were enjoying the stories themselves rather than learning useful information from the book.

Specific research questions related to this area including the following:

- According to adults, what positive or negative effects EGNs have on children?
- Are children absorbing the educational element from the EGNs as the authors and publishers want them to do? How different is the perceived value and actual value of EGNs?
- At which point on the efferent/aesthetic continuum is children's EGN reading located? Or is it very individual?

(2) Is Educational Graphic Novel reading regarded as “real” reading?

As briefly mentioned earlier, it is difficult to find a children's book recommendation list that includes Educational Graphic Novels. The Happy Morning Reading Association's reading guideline suggests that teachers should not allow children to read comic books – including Educational Graphic Novels – during morning reading times at school (2006). Considering that one of the four principles¹² of Happy Morning Reading is “Read the Book I Like,” this seems to imply that this Association does not acknowledge comic book reading as an actual reading activity. Oh Jin-Won, the owner of a children's literature website called Right Foot Left Foot, argues that too much reading of EGNs makes children gradually avoid “books in words” and “serious books” (Lee, N., 2005, p. 34). On the other hand, comics critic Kim Nak-Ho indicates

¹² The four principles are: “Everyone Reads”; “Read Every day”; “Read the Book I Like”; and “Just Read” (Happy Morning Reading Association, 2006).

that the undervaluation of EGNs originates from the long-term prejudice against comics. Kim says that those who underestimate comics “do not hate comics because comics are bad, but they argue comics are bad just because they hate comics” (2005). Many studies in the U.S. report positive relationships between comics and young people’s reading – comics develop language and literacy skills, motivate reluctant readers, and long-term comics readers do more reading than non-comics readers (Krashen, 2004, pp. 101-103). I am curious about the attitude toward comics among people who work with children in their daily lives.

Specific research questions include:

- What are the opinions of experts who work directly with children and reading (elementary school teachers, public children’s librarians, school librarians) regarding EGNs? (e.g., the value of EGNs, the role of EGNs in children’s literature)
- Do teachers agree with the commonly hold belief that EGNs are not serious reading? How do teachers deal with EGNs in their daily interactions with children?
- Do librarians agree with the commonly hold belief that EGNs are not serious reading? How do librarians deal with EGNs in their daily interactions with children?
- What are the criteria used by librarians in selecting EGNs in public and school libraries?
- What collection development resources do public children’s librarians and school librarians use for collection development of EGNs?

(3) Can we evaluate children's reading of Educational Graphic Novels in terms of standards for traditional literacy?

Lee Myung-Suk, a comics critic and reviewer, tells an episode about children and comics. He says that parents often complain: "My child doesn't read any books. He just reads comic books. That drives me crazy!" When Lee comes across such parents, he responds: "Children these days do not read even comic books. They watch animations or play video games" (2003, p. 135). Lee's remark led me to think about where EGNs belong. In other words, I began to think that the EGNs might be a different kind of medium that is located somewhere between the book and other visual media, such as animation or online games. American media scholar Henry Jenkins says, "Ready or not, we are already living within a convergence culture" (2006, p. 16).¹³ He explains that "most broadly, media convergence refers to a situation in which multiple media systems coexist and where media content flows fluidly across them" (2006, p. 322). As mentioned earlier, many EGNs have a typical role-playing game story format. Some EGNs are made into animations and online video games. I wonder if what children really do while reading EGNs is to consume the content and culture that is familiar to them through other media activities. If this is the case, the focus of debate about EGNs should move on to the idea of media convergence and the evaluation of EGNs should be done from the perspective of new media literacy, not traditional text literacy.

Specific research questions related to this area include:

- Should we limit EGNs to the category of "books" or are they more than books?
- How do we understand EGNs in terms of convergence culture?

¹³ Jenkins defines convergence as "[a] word that describes technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes in the ways media circulates within our culture" (2006, p. 322).

- Which features of EGNs appeal to children who are familiar with new media practices?
- What standards should we apply in evaluating children's EGN reading – those of traditional literacy, new media literacy, or both? What are those standards?

Significance

Current studies on Educational Graphic Novels have incorporated either content analysis or survey methods. Content analysis was usually done using one particular EGN or several EGNs with similar topics (Cho, 2007; Jin, 2007; Kang & Jeong, 2009; Noh, 2006; Sim, 2007). For example, Noh Eun-Kyuk explored the presentation styles of EGNs by looking at the *Greek and Roman Mythology Reading in Graphic Novels* series focusing on the characters, storytelling, panels, relationship between text and image, background knowledge on mythology, and applications – e.g., use as a teaching aid (2006). Sim Soo-Min examined the educational effectiveness of history EGNs by analyzing five different history EGN titles (2007).

Several scholars used survey methods to examine teachers' reading guidance on EGN reading (Hwang, 2006; Im, 2009; Jin, 2007; Kim, 2007). Some studies included children as survey participants (Hwang, 2006; Kang & Jeong, 2009; Kim, 2007; Lee, J., 2005; Shin, 2007). The survey questions for children aimed at investigating the influence of EGNs on children's reading behaviors, parents' reading guidance, and children's evaluations of EGNs (Hwang, 2006; Lee, J., 2005), what element of EGNs is appealing to children (Jin, 2007), whether or not reading EGNs helps catching up with the school curriculum (Kang & Jeong), how teachers encourage or discourage reading EGNs (Kim, 2007), or simply whether or not children prefer reading EGNs to other comic books or traditional books (Shin, 2007).

Although the researchers' attempts to include children in the research are noteworthy, most survey questionnaires included multiple choices that were somewhat judgmental. For example, Hwang asked "Which part of history EGNs helped your understanding history?" and provided five answer choices: "(a) knowledge on the flow of history made me like the history class; (b) the summaries on historical facts or people let me understand history in-depth; (c) additional materials (e.g., photos) were helpful; (d) history EGNs helped me to study history class more easily; (e) other." (2006, p. 77). This question implies that history EGNs are helpful to children, which is the researcher's judgment. Moreover, the answer choices are also limited to the positive effects of history EGNs, which is Hwang's judgment again. Critics argue that "survey researchers will not be able to gain access to the *process* through which people adopt particular views, or act in particular ways, by simply posing a series of highly structured questions" (Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2006, p. 141; emphasis by the author). Children's great enthusiasm regarding EGNs is a complex matter and the *process* of their fondness for this particular genre needs to be analyzed. By conducting in-depth focus group interviews with children, it is possible to understand how children, the actual readers of EGNs, use this medium, what elements of EGNs appeal to them, and how they evaluate EGNs as one of the reading materials and/or new media – as spoken in their *own* voices.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Before starting the discussion about Educational Graphic Novels and children's reading, I will begin this chapter by defining the various terms and concepts that are related to Educational Graphic Novels. Terminologies such as "comic books," "graphic novels," and "manhwa" will be introduced and the distinctions between them will be explained. By looking at the history of modern comics of Korea, I will trace how Korean Educational Graphic Novels have originated, developed, and prospered until they became a huge phenomenon among children in Korea. The characteristics of Educational Graphic Novels will be introduced and compared to general comic books. Finally, I will bring discussions on "education fever," which is often assumed to be the biggest reason for Educational Graphic Novels' popularity in Korea.

Terms and Concepts

The origin of comics¹⁴ can be traced back to ancient times (Kwon, 2009, p. 28; McCloud, 1993, p. 9; Park, 2005a, p. 19). Comics critic Stan Tychinski says "From the cave paintings of the Cro-Magnon to the hieroglyphics of Ancient Egypt, graphic storytelling has been in use as a popular means for communicating thoughts and ideas" (2004). Park In-Ha, a comics critic, indicates that Hierakonpolis wall paintings in Ancient Egypt (about 3500 B.C.) exhibit the prototype of comics (2005a, p. 16). Since these ancient paintings, comics have developed into different formats in the east and in the west, communicating the histories of the respective region. East Asian comics stem from the realistic line drawing tradition, while the origin of modern

¹⁴ See page 12 for the definition of comics.

western comics is caricature that exaggerates an individual's distinctive character (Park, 2005a, p. 16).

Many scholars agree that the first “modern comics” as we recognize them today were introduced by Rodolphe Topffer, a Swiss teacher and cartoonist, in 1829 (Groensteen, 2009, p. 3; Kunzle, 2009, p. 17; Kwon, 2009, p. 243; McCloud, 1993, p. 17). McCloud says that Topffer’s “light satiric picture stories, starting in the mid-1800’s, employed cartooning and panel borders, and featured words and pictures seen in Europe” (1993, p. 17). This tradition of modern comics “was perpetuated and refined in weekly and monthly humor magazines in the nineteenth century” in Europe (Harvey, 2009, p. 26), and England was at the forefront of this development (Harvey, 2009, p. 27; McCloud, 1993, p. 18). Comics – called “cartoons” by the 19th century in Europe – in the magazines were of two types: the *political cartoon* and the *purely cartoon*.¹⁵ Usually, the political cartoons “were given the greatest play,” as they appeared on the front and back covers (Harvey, 2009, p. 28). By the early 20th century, comics had evolved into the medium as we perceive it today (McCloud, 1993, p. 18; Wolk, 2007, p. 29).

Definitions of modern comics agree that comics are delicate combinations of text and image (McCloud, 1993, p. 156; Wolk, 2007, p. 14). McCloud compares the relationship between words and pictures of comics to partners in a dance where each one takes turns leading. He insists that a good balance between the two – words and pictures – intensifies the strength of comics as an art form (1993, p. 156). McCloud’s definition of comics, “Juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (1993, p. 9), is widely acknowledged as “the proper definition” that “not only affirms an enhanced social and artistic status for comics but also suggests a greater potential for the medium” (Harvey, 1996, p. 245). The sequential images enable comics to be a

¹⁵ Purely cartoons were named “gag cartoons” by later cartoonists (Harvey, 2009, p. 28).

visual storytelling tool. In order to understand comics, readers must be familiar with their conventions such as left-to-right and top-to-bottom movement, distortion, closure, continuous narrative, symbols and icons (McCloud, 1993).

Terminology

Recently in the U.S. there have been discussions about how to name text with “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (McCloud, 1993, p. 9); “comic books” and “graphic novels” are two of the most frequently used terms to refer to this media. Some scholars make distinctions between these terms while others use them interchangeably. Wolk insists that the terms “comic books” and “graphic novels” basically refer to the same thing: the medium “with panels and word balloons” (2007, p. 61). Versaci uses the terms “comic book” and “graphic novel” interchangeably in his book, *This Book Contains Graphic Language* (2007). However, both Wolk and Versaci acknowledge the physical differences between comic books and graphic novels. Generally speaking, comic books are “thin, saddle-stitched pamphlets” that are “serialized in twenty-to-forty-page installments” and graphic novels are “virtually any squarebound volume of comics” (Wolk, 2007, p. 61). Graphic novels can be a collected volume of comic books that initially appeared in pamphlet forms or they can be an original publication. While comic books are classified as “disposable reading” because of their looser format, graphic novels have a thick spine so that they can sit stably on the bookshelf in bookstores and libraries just like other “real books” (Versaci, 2007, p. 30).

In addition to the physical differences, people’s judgment associated with the terms is also different. *Comic books* have been recognized as lowbrow media and often criticized as

negatively impacting young people's literacy and their behavior (Krashen, 2004, p. 93; Versaci, 2007, p. 7). On the other hand, *graphic novels* have been positively accepted and acknowledged as having artistic and literary value; perhaps this is because graphic novels can be works of both fiction *and* non-fiction¹⁶ (Wolk, 2007, p. 62). Some comic book publishers even use the term “graphic novels” in referring to their books in an attempt to give their books more respectability (Versaci, 2007, p. 196).

In Korea, however, there is only one general term for referring to this media: *manhwa*. Manhwa include all comics including newspaper comic strips, online comics, Disney cartoons, and Japanese manga. The term *manhwa* is known to originate from a Japanese word: manga (漫画) (Kwon, 2009, p. 33; Son, 1996, p. 15). Minjung Essence Korean Dictionary defines manhwa as (1) “An illustration that describes a story in a concise and humorous way (with insertion of conversations)”; (2) “An illustration that is drawn randomly”; (3) “An exaggerated or simplified illustration that satirizes or criticizes the life and the society” (2001). Outside of Korea, the term usually refers specifically to South Korean comics (Avila, 2004; Kim, 2006a). These three East Asian countries – China, Japan, and Korea – share the same enthusiasm that comics are not “just a form of popular entertainment” but “a part of the cultural life itself,” contrary to the general misunderstanding that Japan is the only country in the world where comic books are popular among all generations (Kim, 2006a). “漫畫(漫画)”¹⁷ is read “manhwa” in Korean, “manga” in Japanese, and “manhua” in Chinese.¹⁸ Thus, manhwa, manga, and manhua refer to the same type of publication. According to a phone survey conducted by the Korea Culture & Content Agency (KOCCA), of the 1,320 people surveyed, 1,295 (98.1%) answered

¹⁶ According to children's literature expert Liza Burby, “Despite the use of the word ‘novel,’” graphic novels “may be either fiction or nonfiction” (2004, p. 31).

¹⁷ 画 is a simplified character for 畫.

¹⁸ “Manhwa” is used as a singular noun, and so are “manga” and “manhua.”

that they have read manhwa at least once in their lives (2006, pp. 194, 199). In addition 591 people (44.8%) answered that they own at least one copy of manhwa at home (KOCCA, 2006, p. 171).

Manhwa consists of various genres to meet the interests of this large range of readers. The Korea Manhwa Archive classifies manhwa into 23 genres – science fiction (SF), horror, drama, chivalry, adult/sexual, sport, action, alternative, illustrative, comic, fantasy, school, fight, military/war, romance, historical play, sunjeong (girls'),¹⁹ yaoi,²⁰ children, essaytoon,²¹ cartoon, exorcism, educational (2009). Generally, a manhwa's genre depends very much on its audience (Cho, 2007, p. 9). For example, sunjeong manhwa and yaoi manhwa have been described as “highly gendered” (Noh, 2008, p. 5) media – most of their readers are girls and both help their reader find “a world suited to her own identity” through consumption (Thorn, as cited in Noh, 2008, p. 5). The main audience for educational manhwa, that is Educational Graphic Novels, is elementary school children.

Definition of Educational Graphic Novels

Educational Graphic Novels are very popular among elementary school children²². I use the term “Educational Graphic Novel” instead of “educational manhwa” in this paper for the

¹⁹ Sunjeong manhwa is often translated into “girls’ comics,” because the majority of its readers are teenage girls.

²⁰ Yaoi is a borrowed word from Japan. It is “a type of story generally involving romantic homosexual encounters” (Aquila, p. 39). In most cases the main characters in Yaoi are beautiful-looking gay men. Both the main readers and creators of Yaoi are women.

²¹ Essaytoon is a coined word, which is a combination of “essay” and “cartoon.” Generally, Essay Toons are published online (Yoon, 2004).

²² In Korea, generally, reading drops off after elementary school because of school and parental pressure. Middle school and high school students literally do not have time for pleasure reading. Parents do not recommend reading anymore when their children enter middle school; they only hope their children concentrate on school work and excel on the college entrance exam. Therefore, in the youth (children and young adults) publishing market, pleasure reading materials are focused on elementary school students and EGNs are no exception. According to the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, in 2009, elementary school students read 25.8 books, middle school students read 10.1 books, and high school students read 6.1 books on average during a single year (2009).

following reasons. First, the term “manhwa” is not a familiar word to many of the Americans who are primary readers of this research. Second, as mentioned earlier, “manhwa” cannot be directly translated into one English word. Thus, I have to choose one of the available similar terms, such as “comic books,” “comic strips,” or “graphic novels.” I have chosen “graphic novels” because graphic novels and educational manhwa share many characteristics – both have sturdy bindings and good quality papers; graphic novels are recognized as being effective in literacy development (Crawford, 2004, p. 26) and some are even used as classroom teaching aids (Smith, 2005, p. 5); educational manhwa is created for educational purposes and despite some prejudices against it, many still believe it is a great learning tool for children. Therefore, the term “Educational Graphic Novel” will be used throughout this paper to indicate “educational manhwa”; sometimes the abbreviated form EGN will also be used. Other types of manhwa will be referred to as “general comic books.” When referring to all manhwa including EGNs and general comic books, I will just say “comics.”

Many scholars agree with the notion that comics, like other media, have three major functions: pleasure, education, and catharsis. Comics are fun, easy to understand and effective tools in delivering information [pleasurable function]; they develop the imagination, stimulate learning and increase vocabulary [educational function]; and comics lessen or alleviate nervousness, lighten one’s mind, and give safe, comfortable feelings [cathartic function] (Hwang, 2006; Kim, 1989; Noh, 2006). Among these functions, Educational Graphic Novels focus on the educational aspect. In his master’s thesis²³ Kim Seung-Min defined Educational Graphic Novels as “graphic novels that are created in a form appealing to a popular audience, with a purpose of easier acquisition of useful information in learning; stimulating and motivating a reader to pursue

²³ Although there exist about twenty master’s theses about EGN in Korea, no doctoral dissertation about EGN has been published yet. This is partly because EGN’s popularity is a very recent phenomenon, and partly because comics in general have been perceived as a low-brow medium in Korea.

life long learning; guiding readers for more effective learning” (1989, p. 25). Hwang Hae-Yeon, a graduate student at Kyung Hee University, asserts that “Educational Graphic Novels are made in a popular format to support learning useful information, to cultivate learning motivation in diverse topics, and thus guide readers to more effective education” (2006, p. 5). Examples of EGN topics are mythology and folk tales, history, economics, science, math, foreign language, and common sense. Classical literature, popular TV dramas, films, and horror stories are also reconstructed and published in EGN format. Some EGNs are very relevant to school curriculum: there are EGN titles such as *Textbook Manhwa for 3rd graders: Science* and *Textbook Manhwa Package for 5th graders: Korean; Math; Social Science; Science* (Park, 2003; Sim, 2001). Comics critic Lee Seung-Nam, however, emphasizes the pleasurable aspect of Educational Graphic Novels. He indicates that even though Educational Graphic Novels can be distinguished from general comic books because of their informational and educational functions, we cannot ignore that they are created in a popular form that can be easily accessed by a general population (2005a, p. 13).

Lee Seung-Nam insists that the Educational Graphic Novel is a medium that aims at both pleasure reading and information reading (2005a, p. 13). That is, EGNs are intended to give information to readers while engaging them in a pleasurable experience. Thus, according to Louis Rosenblatt’s transactional theory, EGNs are located at the middle of the “efferent/aesthetic continuum” (Rosenblatt, 1986, p. 125; 2005, p. 10). According to Rosenblatt, reading is “a transactional process that goes on between a particular reader and a particular text at a particular time, and under particular circumstances”; through this transactional process, the reader can make meaning of the text (1986, p. 123). Rosenblatt says that depending on the “stance” a reader

adopts – between the very efferent²⁴ and the very aesthetic – her focus of attention is differentiated. In efferent reading, the reader pays attention to “the residue *after* the reading – the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out” [emphasis by the author]. On the other hand, in aesthetic reading, the reader focuses on “what happens *during* the actual reading event” – “the associations, feelings, attitudes, and ideas” that rise from the text (Rosenblatt, 1978, pp. 23-25). Rosenblatt points out that generally newspapers and legal briefs are read efferently while poems and plays are read aesthetically. She also mentions that “[a]ny text can be read either efferently or aesthetically” (1986, pp. 123-124).

Noh Eun-Hyuk differentiates between EGNs and general comic books in his master’s thesis. According to Noh, general comic books are story-oriented and focus on making a story impact on the readers. On the other hand, EGNs explain facts and provide information through the conversations or narrations of the characters, in fulfillment of an educational function. Noh also points out that in general comic books the illustrations lead the flow of a story, but in many EGNs illustrations just supplement the texts (2006, p. 36). Figure 1 is a page from an EGN, *Why?: Stars and Constellation*²⁵. The primary characters converse about earth’s revolution and rotation; detailed illustrations are used to help readers’ understanding of scientific facts.

²⁴ “Efferent” originates from the Latin word “efferre,” which means “to carry away” (Rosenblatt, 1986, p. 124).

²⁵ The editor of this book insisted that the *Why?* series should be called “Educational Science Comic Books” instead of “Educational Graphic Novels” when introduced in English because the series focuses on science topics (personal communication, December 11, 2011). However, for the coherence of the context, in this dissertation I will refer to the *Why?* series as Educational Graphic Novels.



Figure 1. A Page from *Why?: Stars and Constellation* (Papyrus, 2007, p. 33)²⁶

The other distinctive feature of EGNs is their format. Many EGNs that were published recently have very similar shapes: 6.9 x 9.8 inches (B5 size) although the thickness varies. This is not a strict rule, but a convention. Table 1 compares the differences between EGNs and general comic books in Korea.

²⁶ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Yearimdang.

	Educational Graphic Novels	General Comic Books
Size	- 6.9 x 9.8 inches (B5 size)	- 5.8 x 8.3 inches (A5 size) - 4.9 x 6.9 inches (B6 size)
Paper Quality	- Same as traditional books ²⁷	- Same as regular books or on pulp paper
Contents	- History and Science are the most popular topics with Korean, English, Math, and other subject matters becoming more popular - Emphasizes “educational” function of graphic novels	- Romance, Chivalry, Adult/Sexual, Sport, Action, Humor, Fantasy, School Life, Fight, Military/War, Romance, History, Teen Romance, Yaoi, Science Fiction (SF), Horror
Readers	- Focus on elementary school students - Some of them are popular among adults as well – e.g., <i>Far Countries</i> , <i>Near Countries</i> ²⁸	- Readers of all ages - Different types of graphic novels for different types of readers – e.g., sunjeong manhwa (girls’ comics) targets teenage girls; essaytoons are popular among men and women ages 20 to 30

Table 1. Educational Graphic Novels VS General Comic Books²⁹

History of Educational Graphic Novels

Although the popularity of Educational Graphic Novels among children is a recent phenomenon, it is based on the overall development of Korean comics. This section starts with

²⁷ In Korea, there is not a clear distinction between paperback and hardbound. (In fact, there is no word for ‘paperback’ in Korean.) Books are generally published on good quality paper (similar to what is used in hardbound books in the U.S.) with sturdy but flexible bookbinding.

²⁸ *Far Countries*, *Near Countries* is a series of books created by Rhie Won-Bok, who has been publishing the series since 1987. The first six volumes, *Far Countries*, *Near Countries: Netherlands; France; Germany; England; Switzerland; Italy* (1987) were published by Koryeowon. Current publisher is Gimm-Young Publishers, Inc.

²⁹ This comparison is based on common characteristics of educational graphic novels and regular graphic novels. This may not apply to some books.

looking at the history of modern comics of Korea and then moves on to the Educational Graphic Novel's development and its current state in children's publishing market.

Modern and Contemporary Korean History

Modern comics in Korea began with the sudden influx of western culture in the late 19th century (Kim, 2003, p. 66; Kwon, 2009, p. 36; Son, 1996, p. 87). Korea had been a closed society throughout its history until the mid 19th century, when western countries and Japan demanded its opening. At first, the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392-1910) refused the requests and tried to maintain Confucianism and reinforce royal authority. On the other hand, some Korean scholars, who realized that learning and contact with other countries' new cultures were crucial to strengthening the country, obtained new knowledge from other countries and tried to "civilize" Korea. Unfortunately, Japan colonized Korea in 1910, but efforts to "civilize" Koreans continued even during the colonization period (1910-1945) (Son, 1996, pp. 81-82). After liberation, despite Korean people's hope for an autonomous unified nation, there followed the partitioned occupation by the Soviet Union and the U.S. until 1948; two separate governments were established in the North and the South.³⁰ In 1950, the Korean War broke out and ravaged the country until 1953. After the war, the 1954 Geneva Conference failed to adopt a solution for a unified Korea, and at present Korea remains two separate nations – South Korea and North Korea. South Korea claimed to be a democratic country but it was virtually an anti-Communist dictatorial system and military dictatorship until 1987 when Roh Tae-Woo was elected through a direct presidential election. However, as the core members of Roh's government and Roh himself had participated in the military dictatorship, this government is acknowledged as an

³⁰ The official names of North Korea and South Korea are Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Republic of Korea respectively.

extension of dictatorship. Kim Young-Sam, who was elected in 1993, is the first post-military president whose administration is called the Civilian Government. The subsequent administrations have been more successful at implementing and practicing democracy in South Korea (The Academy of Korean Studies, 2007, pp. 157-173).

History of Modern Comics of Korea

In the late 19th century, printing equipment that was introduced from the west enabled the publication of newspapers and periodicals, which included comics. As was the case in western countries, political issues were the major subject matter in Korean comics during this time period (Kwon, 2009, p. 37; Park, 2005a, p. 21; Son, 1996, p. 101). For example, *Daehan Minbo* – a Korean newspaper that launched in June 1909 and was forced to close by the Japanese government in August 1910 – published many satirical comics criticizing the Japanese invasion of Korea (Son, 1996, pp. 111-140). During Japan’s colonization of Korea (1910-1945), the Korean publishing industry was strictly censored. The Japanese government even “published comics that persuaded young people of Korea to go to war for the Japanese emperor and encouraged farmers to produce more rice to feed the Japanese army” (Park, 2006). As soon as Korea regained its independence after Japan’s defeat in World War II, many books in the Korean language³¹ began to be published and people demanded more Korean language publications (Kim, 2003, p. 67; Kwon, 2009, p. 45). In 1948 the first comics magazine, *Man Hwa Haeng Jin* [*Comics March*], was published by Kim Yong-Hwan (Kwon, 2009, p. 46; Park, 2005a, p. 31).

Since then comics have developed in various ways along with changes in society. During the Korean War (June 26, 1950-July 27, 1953), both North and South Korea used comics as a

³¹ The Japanese government forbade the use of Korean language (Hangeul) in 1941. Magazines and newspapers in Korean language were forced to cease publication and all new publications in Korean language were prohibited.

medium for propaganda. For example, comics artists were hired to make propaganda leaflets (Park, 2005a, p. 31). During and after the war, Ddakji Manhwa (or Ddegi Manhwa) – small, thin comic books made with crude recycled paper – came out and quickly became popular among children (Kwon, 2009, p. 48; Park, 2005a, p. 37). Park says that Ddakji Manhwa was a small but beautiful medium that helped war-devastated children to dream about a better world (2005a, p. 36). In the mid 1950s Dae Bon So,³² a comic book rental shop, was established. A diverse population – boys and girls, the young and the old – frequently visited Dae Bon So, and this worked as a catalyst to encourage many comics artists to emerge. Korean comics developed rapidly in terms of quality, quantity, and market size during mid 1950s to early 1960s. This short period is known as the golden age of Korean comics (Kim, 2003, p. 67; Park, 2005a, p. 43; Park, 2006). The golden age, however, did not last long because of strict pre-censorship³³ under the military coup d'état in 1961 and the monopolization of the distribution network in 1966. Comic artists' imaginative vision was limited and the quality of comic books suddenly diminished (Lent, 1999, p. 196; Park, 2006). Nevertheless, even in this harsh environment, comics for young children³⁴ and comics for adults³⁵ persisted (Kwon, 2009, p. 51; Park, 2005a, pp. 62-69).

In 1979 the military junta that lasted about twenty years ended with another military coup, and the hope for democracy was shattered again in Korea. Ironically, however, the 1980s was a period of rapid growth in Korean popular culture. Park says “A new breed of dramatic epics

³² Dae Bon So resembled a small library, but the collection was comprised entirely of comic books. You could rent a comic book and read it in the Dae Bon So reading room – it was a non-circulating library. The rental fee was cheap enough to be affordable for a child (Kwon, 2009, p. 49). During the 1950s, Dae Bon So was common in almost every mid size town in Korea (Oh-ong, 2009).

³³ During the military junta, the government checked all media before publication for what it considered inappropriate content – e.g., political views that could threaten the government. Transcripts, photographs, illustrations, films, and recordings were all supposed to be submitted before publication. Modifications or erasures of certain content were ordered. No medium could be published without this pre-censorship process (Keom-yol, n.d.; Moon, 2008, p. 18).

³⁴ The major theme for these comics (comics for children in 1960s-1970s) was family (Park, 2005, p. 66).

³⁵ These comics (comics for adults in 1960s-1970s) contained adult/sexual contents.

came about among the rental shops and flourished” (2006). With the help of active support from the publishers, comics artists created good quality comics in many genres and gained success and popularity. Comic book publishers brought out comic magazines for diverse ages and genres and informal study groups of comic books began to rise to the surface and become popular among the general public. People with a range of interests, such as social justice, pure literature and the fine arts, started to be interested in comics, mainly because of their familiarity and appeal to the public (Kim, 2003, p. 72; Kwon, 2009, p. 55; Park, 2005a, p. 78). Some comics critics insist that the early 1980s is the second golden age of Korean comics (Kim, 2003, p. 72; Park, 2005a, p. 78).

In spite of the great potential of Korean comics artists, starting in 1992 two major comic book publishers, Seoul Cultural Publishers and Daewon, began to expand their business by importing Japanese comics. Many of these imported Japanese comics were those that were already popular among children and young adults since the mid 1980s through pirated editions (Han, 2005, p. 119). For example, the pirated editions of the *Slam Dunk*³⁶ series and the *Dragon Ball*³⁷ series were widely available in small stationery stores located next to elementary and middle schools. The price was affordable even for elementary school students – 500 won (0.42 USD) per copy – so many children could buy them with their own pocket money (Dugoboja, 2006). The popularity of Japanese comics among Korean children and young adults did not stop with the official import but increased even more. By bringing in more Japanese comics rather than increasing the quality of Korean comics, publishers tried to overcome the International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic crisis, which began in the mid to late 1990s. These efforts made it more difficult for Korean comics artists to survive in the publishing industry (Kim, 2003, p. 75;

³⁶ *Slam Dunk* is a manga series written and illustrated by Takehiko Inoue. It is a story about basketball players in a high school in Japan.

³⁷ *Dragon Ball* is a manga series written and illustrated by Akira Toriyama. The story and characters of this series are inspired by the Chinese folk novel *Journey to the West*.

Park, 2005a, p. 79). The result was a major Korean comics industry that was easily swayed by frequently changing trends. Many comics artists easily joined the publishing market by riding the tide of emerging trends, but when another trend came forward they quickly disappeared. Despite – or perhaps because of – this chaos, some young comics artists who referred to themselves as “underground artists” began to produce high quality works created with diverse, experimental approaches. In addition, as the Internet became more popular, some comics artists started to publish their works through their own personal websites (Kwon, 2009, p. 57; Park, 2005a, p. 81). These works are usually called “Webtoons” or “Essaytoons” (Kwon, 2009, p. 57; Korean Manhwa Archive, 2009).

History of Educational Graphic Novels

According to comics critic Kim Nak-Ho, the Educational Graphic Novel is a genre that is uniquely Korean. Even though in other countries there are some cases of using comics for educational purposes – e.g., as a teaching aid in the classroom – Korea is the only country that acknowledges the Educational Graphic Novel as an independent genre in terms of both marketing and from a literary perspective (2006b, p. 55). However, it has not been long since Educational Graphic Novels came into the spotlight in the history of Korean comics. The term “Educational Graphic Novel” was not coined until the 1970s, even though there were comic books that could be categorized as educational comic books in terms of present perspectives (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 19). Lee Seung-Nam, a comics critic, asserts that comic books for children that contained history and classical literature themes in the 1950s and 1960s can be considered stepping-stones to the birth of Educational Graphic Novels in Korea. *Kojubu Samkukji* [*Kojubu’s*

Romance of the Three Kingdom] created by Kim Yong-Hwan³⁸ is one example. At that time these comic books were categorized as comic books for children, since the term “Educational Graphic Novel” did not come into use until the 1970s (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 19).

Interest in children’s reading education started in the late 1950s and gradually increased during the 1960s in Korea (Yeun, 2007, p. 278; Yeun, 2008, p. 527; Lee, S., 2005b, p. 19). Scholars who study children’s reading published their opinions on children’s reading behaviors, discussed the problems, and suggested positive directions regarding children’s reading education. They also emphasized parents’ roles in reading guidance (Yeun, 2007, p. 278). The most frequently discussed “problem” regarding children’s reading materials in the 1960s was children’s reading of comic books (Park, 2005a, p. 102; Yeun, 2007, p. 278). For example, a survey of children’s reading indicates that comic books ranked first (by 2nd grade students) and third (by 5th grade students) as the most beloved reading material among elementary school students in Seoul³⁹ (*Joongang Ilbo*, Oct 20, 1960, as cited in Yeun, 2007, p. 279). Reflecting this social atmosphere, traditional children’s book publishers began to publish Educational Graphic Novels in the 1970s. Major children’s book publishers invited comics artists to draw illustrations for their books. Most EGNs were about Korean history and great men and women in the world. In addition, children’s magazines⁴⁰ also published series of EGNs with themes of adventure, general education, and classical literature (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 20). EGN publication by major children’s book publishers continued in the 1980s. Early EGNs in the 1970s to 1980s, however,

³⁸ Kim Yong-Hwan, mentioned previously, published the first comic book magazine, *Manhwa Haengjin [Comics March]* in Korea in 1948 (Kwon, 2009, p. 46; Park, 2005, p. 31).

³⁹ This is partly due to the lack of reading materials for children in Korea in the 1960s. Children’s books were rare, and the few available children’s books were sold by series, which were expensive for an average family household (Yeun, 2007, p. 279).

⁴⁰ Korean children’s magazines in the 1970s carried articles about art, literature, science, adventure, exploration, and hobbies that would encourage students to have dreams and ambitions. They also contained portions of Educational Graphic Novels, which attracted many children (Park, 2005, p. 74).

were education-centered. They focused on delivering educational information but did not pay much attention to the storytelling aspect, a critical oversight that made many EGNs unengaging (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 20; Lim, 2005). Most EGNs during this time period were published as series – 10 to 20 volumes in general – and were sold door-to-door, not in bookstores (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 20).

In 1987 an Educational Graphic Novel that was not only informational but also interesting came out: *Monnara Iunnara* [*Far Countries, Near Countries*] by Rhie Won-Bok. Consisting of six volumes in total, *Monnara Iunnara* introduces the history and culture of many European countries based on the author's thorough knowledge and personal experience during his visits to Europe. This was such a groundbreaking piece that the media began to pay attention to this somewhat new genre, the Educational Graphic Novel. *Monnara Iunnara* became commonly used not only among children but also among adults, and was thus categorized as an adult book as well (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 21). Lee published 6 more volumes later – about the United States, Japan, China, and Korea – and at present more than 10 million copies of the *Monnara Iunnara* [*Far Countries, Near Countries*] series have been sold in Korea (JuniorGimmyoungsa, 2009). After the success of this series EGNs started to be sold in bookstores as separate volumes. In the 1990s more children's book publishers began to be involved in the EGN business. Some of the most popular EGNs in the 1990s include *Kyo Kwa Seo Manhwa* [*Textbook Comics*] by Glsure and *Manhwa Kyo Kwa Seo* [*Comics Textbook*] by Samsung Books, both of which are comics versions of elementary school science, math, social science, history, and Korean textbooks⁴¹ (Lee, 1990). Other EGNs that were published as separate volumes – as opposed to in series – from many children's publishers were enormously

⁴¹ In Korea, all elementary schools use the same textbooks that are published or officially approved by the government; English textbooks are the exception (Ha, 2006, p. 100; Hong, 2008, p. 59; Korean Textbook Research Foundation, 2008).

successful, which resulted in proving EGNs' marketability and financial feasibility in the Korean publishing market (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 21).



Figure 2. A Page from *Monnara Iunnara: France* [Far Countries, Near Countries] (Rhie, 2003, p. 24)⁴²

Despite the success of *Monnara Iunnara* in 1987, Educational Graphic Novels were still undervalued by comics artists. EGNs were not particularly popular compared to other comics until the 1990s (Cho, M., 2007, p. 20; Lee, M., 2009, p. 9; Park, 2005a, p. 275); during that time many EGNs were drawn by new comics artists or by old comics artists who were not competitive anymore (Cho, 2007, p. 20). However, with the unexpected huge success of one EGN series,

⁴² The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Rhie, Won-Bok.

Greek and Roman Mythology Reading in Graphic Novels,⁴³ the EGN market instantly soared. *Greek and Roman Mythology Reading in Graphic Novels* first appeared in November 2000 and a total of 20 volumes have been published since. According to statistics from 2005, this series sold a total of 10,230,000 copies⁴⁴ (Yang, 2005); more recent statistics report a total of 13 million copies (Cho, M. H., 2009). Throughout the history of Korean publishing, the bestselling traditional book is *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* [*Sam Kuk Ji*], written by Lee Moon-Yul, which sold 15 million copies since it was first published in 1988 (Noh, 2006, p. 3). Considering that *Romance of the Three Kingdom* was sold continuously for 10 years, but *Greek and Roman Mythology in Graphic Novels* took just five years to go beyond 10 million, we can see the power of this EGN. Following the success of *Greek and Roman Mythology in Graphic Novels*, other EGNs also gained huge popularity. According to a recent statistic *Magic Thousand Characters Text*⁴⁵ by Owl Book sold 13 million copies; the *Why?*⁴⁶ series by Yerimdang sold 40 million copies⁴⁷; and *Survival Manhwa Science Common Sense*⁴⁸ by I-Seum sold 20 million copies (Lee, S. E., 2011; Kim, J., 2011). Some EGNs are even exported to other countries such as France, Taiwan, Mainland China, Japan, and Russia (Cho, M. H., 2009; Kwon, 2007; Pyo, 2009, p. 26).

Moreover, some EGN characters are adapted into online video games, board games, musicals, food, drink, and other commercial goods, which make EGNs even more popular (Choi, 2007; Pyo, 2009, p. 26; Han et al., 2004, p. 34). For example, *Magic Thousand Characters Text* was adapted into a movie (*Magic Thousand Characters Text: Defend Against the Resurrection of*

⁴³ Graphic novel version of *Greek and Roman Mythology*, published by Gana Books.

⁴⁴ By 2005, the population of Korea was 47,278,951; youth (0-14) comprised of 19.1% of the total population (The National Atlas of Korea, 2009a; 2009b).

⁴⁵ The main character uses Chinese characters as a magic spell in the story. Children are expected to naturally learn the Chinese characters while reading this book.

⁴⁶ The main characters learn scientific and historic facts through their journeys.

⁴⁷ The *Why?* series is the first single content that exceeded sale of 40 million copies.

⁴⁸ An adventure story combined with scientific knowledge.

the Great Demon King), a musical (*Musical Magic Thousand Characters Text*) that was presented in major cities in Korea, software for Nintendo DS⁴⁹ (*Magic Thousand Characters Text DS*), and children's beverages (*Magic Thousand Characters Text: apple and red ginseng taste* and *Magic Thousand Characters Text: plum and red ginseng taste*). *Magic Thousand Characters Text RPG* (Role-Playing Game) is being developed by NC Soft⁵⁰ and is expected to be released in 2012 (Character Goods, 2011, p. 51).

Current State of the Educational Graphic Novels Market

Children are still reading EGNs as much as ever, but the expansion of the EGN market does not guarantee the success of all published EGNs. Except for a few titles such as the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* series and *Why?* series, most EGNs did not create enthusiastic responses from child readers. Only a few titles have been constantly popular among children. Moreover, most popular EGNs started publishing after the early to mid 2000s, which means there are no new megahits anymore (Lim, 2009; Park, 2010). Many experts find the reason in the rough-and-ready publishing system. After the success of the few EGN series mentioned above, many publishers – not only those who were already in the EGN business but also those who were tangential to children's books or comic books – jumped into the EGN business, dreaming of a huge success. In order to win the battle, many of those publishers shortened the production time for an EGN. As a general rule, at least 5 to 6 months are needed to plan and publish a single EGN volume. Yearimdang⁵¹ even invested three years to publish the first three volumes of the *Why?* series. However, some EGNs are made in only 1 or 2 months, or even in 20 days, which

⁴⁹ Nintendo DS is a handheld game console developed and manufactured by Nintendo – an international software and hardware company.

⁵⁰ NC Soft is an internationally famous software company.

⁵¹ Yearimdang is the publisher of the *Why?* series.

yields poor quality EGNs (Choi, 2007; Choi, 2009; Lim, 2009). Experts' knowledge on the subject matter or the illustrators' artistic painting style is ignored in these cases. Instead, a comics artist – a non-expert on the particular subject matter – writes the plot based on his/her own rough research from the internet, and a group of people are involved in drawing and coloring the pages in very simple and ordinary ways. Although some of these EGNs go through editorial supervisions by scholars, many still contain incorrect information or miss essential points (Choi, 2007; Hwang, 2009; Park, 2005a). Sometimes outstanding EGNs that contain good educational content are published, but most do not sell more than 10 thousand copies (Lim, 2009). Lack of diversity in EGNs' subject matter is also recognized as a problem. These megahit EGNs are focused on certain topics such as Chinese characters, mythology, history and science. Cultural literacy and economics seemed to be popular in the early 2000s but those topics did not grow as much as the extremely popular EGNs (Lim, 2009).

Jeong Young-Hoon, a children's book editor, insists that robust plot, good illustration and strategic publishing plan⁵² make a popular Educational Graphic Novel (2005, p. 1). Hong Jae-Chul, a comics publication planner, points out the importance of marketing (as cited in Han et al., 2008, p. 21). *Magic Thousand Characters Text* is a good example of strategic marketing. When the first few volumes of the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* were published in 2003, the publisher largely advertised the series in children's newspapers and adults' newspapers. They also distributed the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* game cards to children in front of elementary schools and placed sample books⁵³ in bookstores so that children could take them.

⁵² Strategic publishing plan includes (1) developing an original item (subject matter) to teach children; (2) good balance between the comical element and educational element; (3) strategy for well-developed characters and high-quality illustrations (Jeong, 2005, p. 3).

⁵³ A Sample Book is a small pamphlet that contains 10-20 pages of a book. Distributing sample books to children is a common marketing strategy among EGN publishers these days in Korea (Han et al., 2008, p. 32).

On Children's Day⁵⁴, the publisher held an event at a bookstore to give out a gift card worth \$5 to those who purchased an EGN worth \$8.50 (Han et al., 2008, p. 21; p. 31). Yoon Sang-Seok, a children's book editor, indicates that in the EGN market the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The sales of EGNs in big chain stores are more robust than that in bookstores. However, the big chain stores only take EGNs that are already popular and have sold a certain number of copies in other places (as cited in Han et al., 2008, p. 32). Therefore, newly published EGNs have difficulty in entering the big chain stores, which leads to fewer sales.

Characteristics of Educational Graphic Novels

A number of children's literature experts in Korea argue that Educational Graphic Novels comprise an effective combination of entertainment and educational elements in a comic format (Han et al., 2004, p. 21; Hong, 2005, p. 35; Lee, M., 2009, p. 9; Lee, S., 2005b, p. 13; Lim, 2005). Hong Jae-Chul, an editor for children's book publisher I-Seum, says that the ratio of the educational element to the entertaining element in today's EGNs is about 65 to 35, and indicates that the entertaining element is increasing (2005, p. 35). Considering that the ratio of educational element to entertaining element in EGNs until the 1990s was 80 to 20, today's EGNs obviously became much funnier to read (Lim, 2005)⁵⁵. Park argues that the greatest difference between EGNs before 2000 and after 2000 is that the latter could overcome "the obsession with being educational" (2005a, p. 268). Today's EGNs actively embrace the distinctive features of major comic books – interesting storylines and attractive illustrations (Park, 2005a, p. 270; Pyo, 2009, p. 27).

⁵⁴ The Children's Day is a national holiday in Korea. It is on May 5th.

⁵⁵ Both Hong and Lim do not specify how they arrived at these figures or the criteria they used.

Park points out that the storyline of *Greek and Roman Mythology in Reading in Graphic Novels* is a typical RPG (Role Playing Game)⁵⁶ format. *Greek and Roman Mythology in Reading in Graphic Novels* follows this format: it has elements such as (1) new adventures, (2) acquisition of items, (3) primary characters' learning and development, (4) continuous emergence of new characters, and (5) explicit conflicts and romance (Park, 2005a, p. 270). Many other bestselling EGNs – e.g., *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, *Survival Manhwa Science Common Sense, Why?* – follow the same storytelling formula. Usually there is a primary character and two sub-characters, all of whom go through the adventure together. The primary character is an inquisitive and lively boy; one secondary character is a smart girl; the other secondary character is a male adult who leads the journey and is knowledgeable about the given subject (Kang & Jeong, 2009, p. 170).⁵⁷ Because new adventures continually appear, these EGNs are published as series (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 22; Park, 2005a, p. 270).

The other distinctive feature of new and more recent EGNs since 2000 is attractive illustrations that are indistinguishable from general comics (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 22; Noh, 2006, p. 47; Lim, 2005). While previous EGN illustrations used simple line drawings and cartoonish characters as a way to more easily approach young readers,⁵⁸ today's EGNs apply the major comics' illustration style (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 22; Park, 2005a, p. 269) – recognized as “manga” style in the U.S. (See Figure 3) – with delicate drawings and beautiful colors. Most Korean children have been familiar with this illustration style through general comic book reading, TV animations, and online/video games, since these comprise their conventional sources of entertainments. Thus, children could acknowledge that the new style EGNs were as much fun as

⁵⁶ In RPG (Role Playing Game), the game player carries out a given mission that makes him/her grow up (Park, 2005, p. 270).

⁵⁷ This is not a strict rule, but a general tendency.

⁵⁸ McCloud says that the more abstract an image of a character is, the more easily readers can identify with the character (1993, p. 30).

other entertaining media⁵⁹ (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 22; Noh, 2006, p. 47; Pyo, 2009, p. 28). The popularity of EGNs led major comics artists to join the EGN field. One reason for this is the financial decline of the major traditional comic book field and another reason is the publishers' endeavor to improve the quality of EGN illustrations and storylines (Lee, S., 2005b, p. 26; Lim, 2005; Park, 2005a, p. 278).



Figure 3. Book Covers from *Magic Thousand Characters Text* (2003)⁶⁰, *Greek and Roman Mythology Reading in Graphic Novels* (2005)⁶¹, & *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* (2006)⁶².

Education Fever in Korea

Some scholars argue that one of the biggest reasons for Educational Graphic Novels popularity in Korea is Korean parents' extreme devotion to child education (Cho, M. H., 2009; Lee, M. S., 2008, p. 9; Lee, J., 2009; Noh, 2006, p. 1). “Kyoyuk yol” or “kyoyuk yolgi” [literally translated as “education fever”] is a special term for indicating this “national obsession” with education in Korea (Seth, 2002, p. 1). Michael J. Seth, the author of *Education Fever: Society,*

⁵⁹ Because of these dual characteristics – entertaining and educational – EGNs are often referred to as “edutainment comics” (Kang & Jeong, 2009, p. 166).

⁶⁰ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Book21.

⁶¹ The permission to use this image was granted verbally by the copyright holder Anigana.

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Politics, and the Pursuit of Schooling in South Korea, summarizes the reality of Korean education that surprised him, from the perspective of an American scholar:

Everywhere there are “cram schools” (*hagwon*),⁶³ where elementary, middle, and high school students study late in the evening and on weekends. Every neighborhood has a store selling textbooks, supplementary readings, and guides to the entrance examinations. Adults, too, study at night schools, attempting to advance their education. Real estate prices depend as much on the reputation of local schools as on the inherent desirability of the location or the quality of housing. South Korean families invest heavily in the education of their children, and children and young adults spend a huge portion of their time studying and preparing for examinations. Education pops up in conversation often, and the success of a son, daughter, or grandchild at entering a “good” school is a source of great pride (2002, pp. 1-2, emphasis by the author).

Education fever continues today. A recent article reveals a typical daily schedule of a Korean elementary school student during summer break. Park, a nine-year-old boy who lives in Seoul, wakes up at 9:00 a.m., has math lesson at a math *hagwon* from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., has lunch at home, has a taekwondo lesson until 3:30 pm, has an English lesson at an English *hagwon* from 4:00-5:30 p.m., studies English again through an Internet English education program, has dinner, studies Korean and math with textbooks and supplementary readings, and prepares for the Chinese character examination until 10:00 p.m. Park goes to bed at 11:00 p.m. (Yoo, 2008). According to the Korea National Statistical Office, the average amount of money spent on one student’s private education – e.g., *hagwon* and private tutoring – is 233,000 won (198 USD) per month (2009, p. 3). The amount of money spent on *hagwon* and private tutoring correlates with parents’ education level, family income, and students’ achievements at school (pp.

⁶³ A *hagwon* is similar to private tutoring but the class size varies from fewer than 10 students to more than 300 students. The *hagwon* system is similar to the public school system – usually there is a director, a vice director, and classroom teachers in a *hagwon*, just as there is a principal, a vice principal, and classroom teachers in public schools.

9-12).⁶⁴ Another survey on the cost of private education, focusing on Seoul, indicates that 652,000 won (554 USD) is spent on children's education on average per month by a single family (Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, as cited in Choi & Kim, 2009).⁶⁵ Considering that the average income of a city household is 2,928,000 won (2,486 USD) per month, and the cost of living is high in Korea, it is easy to see that many families work hard and sacrifice to support their children's education.

Scholars attempt to explain the reasons for education fever, citing diverse factors such as the Confucianism that values learning, the sudden economic development of Korea after the 1950s, elitism, the college entrance exam that is often called "examination hell" (Lee, 2002, p. 211), and a social structure that is more generous to college graduates (Guo, 2005; Lee, 2002; Lee, 2007; Park & Cho, 2007; Seth, 2002). Politicians have continuously suggested and executed new policies to solve the "education problem," but those attempts were always criticized for aggravating social conflict (Kim et al., 2007, p. 5). Koreans often joke that: "If you solve the education problem, you can be the president of Korea."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ This survey was conducted with a representative national sample of 34,000 parents whose children are elementary, middle, and high school students in Korea (Korea National Statistical Office, 2009, p. 23).

⁶⁵ This survey was conducted with a representative sample of 25,955 parents whose children are elementary, middle, and high school students in Seoul (Choi & Kim, 2009).

⁶⁶ For more information on the Korean education system, as explained from an American's point of view, see Guo, Y. (2005). *Asia's Educational Edge: Current Achievements in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, and India*.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction to This Chapter

In her study on women who read romance novels,⁶⁷ Janice A. Radway followed three steps. First, she situated the publishing of popular romance novels in the larger history of the publishing industry in the U.S. She examined how changes in the publishing industry contributed to the growth of this body of literature in the 1970s and 1980s. The second step was to conduct research on the readers. She did a field study in a small town in the U.S. Midwest, focusing on interviews with romance novel readers. From the interviews Radway could hear the readers' own voices about why this particular genre appeals to them. As the last step, Radway analyzed the romance novel texts – character, plot, theme – using criteria that were informed by the interviews with women romance novel readers. Radway says, “I had come to realize that although the Smithton⁶⁸ women are not accustomed to thinking about what it is in the romance that gives them so much pleasure, they know perfectly well why they like to read. I understood this only when their remarkably consistent comments forced me to relinquish my inadvertent but continuing preoccupation with the text” (1991, p. 86). Radway emphasized the importance of listening to the readers' own voices and reflecting these voices in the content analysis process.

In order to thoroughly analyze the popularity of Educational Graphic Novels in Korea, I drew on the research method from Radway's work. The first step was to investigate the location of Educational Graphic Novels in the larger body of comics, manhwa (Korean comics), and

⁶⁷ Radway, J. A. (1991). *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*.

⁶⁸ Smithton is the fictitious name of the town where Radway did her field research.

Korean children's literature, as presented in the literature review section of this dissertation. Second, I conducted in-depth group discussions with children, the actual readers of EGNs, and with teachers and librarians, who are responsible for children's reading education. Third, I observed children's reading behavior in a public school classroom, in a school library, and in a public children's library in Korea. Fourth, I analyzed the content of a sample of EGNs using the criteria that emerged from the group discussions and interviews. Below I will explain more about the second, third and fourth processes – focus group discussions, interviews, observations and content analysis.

Institutional Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

This project was assigned University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol Numbers 10046, 10047 and 11590 and reviewed and approved.

Data Collection

This study consists of four different methods: focus group interviews with children; interviews with teachers and librarians who work with children; observation of an elementary school classroom, a school library, and a public library; and content analysis of selected Educational Graphic Novels.

Voices of Children – Focus Group with Children

Listening to children's own voices in response to Educational Graphic Novels was the most significant aspect of this study. Thus, the most focused attention was given to obtaining this primary data source. The focus group children were recruited by a snowball sampling method. I

conducted three focus groups: two of them were mixed gender groups and one was composed of girls only. Each group met four times and shared opinions on three selected Educational Graphic Novels. Detailed processes of the focus group interviews with children are described below.

Focus group

A focus group is “a discussion involving a small number of participants, led by a moderator, which seeks to gain an insight into the participants’ experiences, attitudes and/or perceptions” (Hennessy & Heary, 2005, p. 236). Focus groups are often used when gathering information on children’s views or perspectives, as children tend to be more relaxed when they are with peers than with one-to-one interviews. Hood, Keely, and Mayall note that “the social mismatch between adult interviewer and child subject may be lessened in group interviews where children have support from their peers” (as cited in James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998, p. 190). In addition, group discussions can enrich the quality of the research. In a study conducted by interviewing young children, Baturka and Walsh “found that the richest parts of the interviews came from the discussion between the children as they talked to each other about her questions, rather than from their direct answers, which often appeared to be attempts to give the ‘right’ answer” (as cited in Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. 114). The literature suggests that three or four focus groups are necessary in order to achieve saturation. Saturation is “a term used to describe the point when you have heard the range of ideas and aren’t getting new information” (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 26); this is to establish trustworthiness, a qualitative term which is the loose equivalent of validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 218).

I conducted three focus groups. Each focus group consisted of four to five children⁶⁹ ages 7 to 11 because children of this age are generally acknowledged as the main readers of EGNs. Participants in this research were the children of Korean visiting scholars who were temporary residents in the U.S., specifically at the University Village of UC Berkeley and Walnut Creek. Lincoln and Guba argue that collecting data in more than one place may increase the trustworthiness and rigor of a qualitative research (1985, p. 305). Berkeley and Walnut Creek are cities in the Bay Area, California, of U.S., which are about 15 miles away from each other. Both Berkeley and Walnut Creek have many Korean visiting scholars to UC Berkeley whose children fit the age limit of my research. Because their typical residence is 6 to 12 months, my participants were not very different from Korean children in Korea in terms of their experience of EGNs. However, while living in the U.S., they did not have the same frequent access to EGNs they had in Korea because the local libraries – Albany Library, Walnut Creek Library, and Lafayette Library – did not have Korean EGNs in their collections. Only a few participants had EGNs at home in the U.S. This is understandable because many Korean parents say that it is very likely that Korean parents who come to the U.S. as visiting scholars do not bring EGNs and other pleasure reading from Korea in order to minimize packing for moving and also to promote their children's English education. My participants' less frequent access to EGNs compared to children in Korea may sound like a weakness, but in fact it turned out to be an advantage: these children had a thirst for EGNs so they participated in the research with enthusiasm, particularly because they were given copies of the three EGNs they discussed as gifts at the end of the focus group interviews.

⁶⁹ Typically recommended group size for a focus group with children is "no fewer than five children and no more than eight" (Charlesworth & Rodwell; Greenbaum; Vaughn et al., as cited in Hennessy & Heary, 2005, p. 241).

Snowball sampling

I used the recruitment method of “snowballing.” Snowball sampling is “[a] method of sampling in which sample elements are selected as they are identified by successive informants or interviewees” (Schutt, 2008, p. 174). In snowball sampling, the researcher identifies one or more members of the target population of her research and asks those individuals to identify others who would be likely participants for the research (Babbie, 2009, p. 193; Bernard, 2000, p. 179; Chambliss & Schutt, 2009, p. 124). Snowball sampling is “a form of purposive (or judgment) sampling ... which is largely determined by the judgment of the researcher” (Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2006, p. 133). It is also a modification of convenience sampling that selects participants “on the basis of convenience” rather than “in a serious attempt to select participants who are representatives of the theoretical population” (Gliner & Morgan, 2000, p. 155). I spoke to Korean visiting scholars in UC Berkeley with whom I was acquainted and asked if their children might be interested in becoming participants in this research. Then I asked these individuals to refer me to other families and children. I posted recruiting messages on the web page of the Korean Graduate Student Association at UC Berkeley (<http://www.kgsa.net>)⁷⁰. I also posted hard copies of the recruiting message on the bulletin boards of the University Village Community Center, Korean churches in Berkeley and Walnut Creek, Albany Library, Walnut Creek Library, and Lafayette Library.⁷¹

Assent, parental permission and confidentiality

In research involving children as participants, two levels of approval are required: *assent/informed consent* of the participating children and *permission* of the parents or guardians

⁷⁰ The Korean Graduate Student Association is an official student organization of UC Berkeley whose members include UC Berkeley Korean graduate students, post-docs, visiting scholars and their families.

⁷¹ The recruiting message is attached in the appendix.

(Balen et al., 2006, p. 34; Morrow, 2005, p. 156; Tymchuk, 1992, p. 128). According to Tymchuk, informed consent is “a process in which a competent adult voluntarily agrees to participate in a research project, based on a full disclosure of pertinent information” (1992, p. 128). Many current researchers emphasize the importance of getting the informed consent of child participants as well (Morrow, 2005, p. 156).⁷² Weithorn and Sherer argue that giving children the opportunity to consent or refuse to participate in research is “not only a right in relation to research which children share with adults, but also contributes to their wellbeing, through giving respect for their sense of control” (as cited in Hill, 2005, p. 68). Medical research indicates that 14-years-olds and older are able to make judgments as adults do, but in many cases assent is required instead of informed consent (Hill, 2005, p. 68; Tymchuk, 1992, p. 128). In research involving children, assent means an “affirmative agreement of the child to participate in the research” (English, as cited in Balen et al., 2006, p. 34). A child’s assent should accompany parental permission. Parental permission is generally “treated in much the same way as informed consent” (Nelson, 2006, p. 369). Tymchuk says that obtaining parental permission and the child’s assent is “a parallel process in which the parent or guardian agrees to allow a minor ward to participate in a research project, and the minor child assents or agrees to be a subject in the research” (1992, p. 128). Providing careful explanation and potential outcomes of the research to both children and their parents or guardians, as well as answering any questions and concerns, is important in the process of getting assent and parental permission (Hill, 2005, p. 68). The Institutional Review Board of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign requires assent of

⁷² In 1983 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) promulgated a regulation that recognizes that “minors are entitled to exercise an influence on decisions about their research participation, independent of their parents’ decisions” (Grisso, 1992, p. 109).

children and parental permission for all research involving children (2009): My research followed this protocol.⁷³

Confidentiality is important in all ethical research. It should be carefully considered in cases of research involving children because “some parents may feel their child does not have the right to confidentiality and may want to be privy to their child’s responses” (Cuskelly, 2005, p. 103). Christensen and Prout say that the balance of “‘ethical symmetry’ between adults and children” is important, particularly when the researcher finds herself in a dilemma regarding confidentiality, such as when an adult authority wants to know the children’s responses when the researcher has promised the children to keep their words confidential (2002, p.482, 486). By balancing the ethical symmetry a researcher may attain “trust and loyalty” from both the participating children and their parents, which is crucial in conducting research with children (Christensen & Prout, 2002, p. 486; Christensen, 2004, pp. 172-173). Many scholars indicate that children are very concerned about the privacy and confidentiality of the research in which they participate in (Christensen, 2004, p. 171; Hill, 2005, p. 74). One way of maintaining their trust is to routinely reassure them of the confidentiality of the research – e.g., the access to the recorded conversation is limited to the researcher, participants will not be identified in research reports, the researcher will not pass on information to other people – in addition to the initial clarification at the assent stage (Christensen, 2004, p. 171; Hill, 2005, p. 75). Christensen says reassurance is important because “[n]ot only are children aware of the possible ‘exploitation’ of information but also confidentiality has a particular resonance among children whose relationships and friendships are often performed through the engagement with telling and keeping secrets, revealing secrets to other children or ‘telling’ adults” (2004, p. 171).

⁷³ The participant assent form and the parental permission letter are attached in the appendix.

In order to assure children of the confidentiality of the research I confirmed that only my advisor and I would have access to the recorded conversations. I told them that I would use pseudonyms instead of their real names in my dissertation. The group discussion sessions at Berkeley were conducted in the living room of my house, which was located in the University Village of UC Berkeley. All but one of the participating children in the Berkeley area also lived in the University Village of UC Berkeley; one girl's house was 5 minutes walk from the University Village. Parents walked or dropped off their children to my house before each session. When the sessions were dismissed, my assistant moderator⁷⁴ and I walked with or dropped off the children to their houses. The group discussion sessions at Walnut Creek were conducted at one of the meeting rooms at Lafayette Library, the public library in the neighborhood. Parents drove their children to the library. When the parents could not drive the children, my assistant moderator and I picked up the children from their houses. Parents who came with the children were asked to wait in the library reading room, which was inside the Lafayette Library building but far from the meeting room where discussion sessions were held. The meeting rooms at Lafayette Library were acoustically insulated, so the conversations inside the meeting room were not heard from the outside. That being so, children could talk freely without worrying that their parents might be listening to them.

Selection of discussion materials

The Study followed a qualitative approach relying on in-depth group discussions with semi-structured questions focusing on three EGNs that were purposefully selected by the

⁷⁴ The role of the assistant moderator will be explained in a later section.

researcher: *Magic Thousand Characters Text I: Blow Baram Pung* (2004); *Why? I: Universe* (2008)⁷⁵; and *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base* (2006).

I tried to select EGNs that were familiar to most of my participants. Typically EGNs are read over and over again by children. Therefore, even though some participants might have read the selected EGNs before the focus groups, they would be likely be interested in reading them again. I planned to begin the focus groups in February 2010, and usually visiting scholars stay in the U.S. for 6 to 12 months. Therefore the EGNs that would be discussed with the children were published before February 2009. On the other hand, EGNs that were popular close to 2000 might be new to the youngest participants of the group. Therefore I limited the EGN titles that would be used in the focus groups to those that were popular in 2007 and 2008. (An eight-year-old who was in 3rd grade in February 2010 in the Korean academic year might have started reading EGNs beginning in 2007 when she was in the 1st grade; children are taught to read Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, in school beginning their 1st year.) I consulted the 2007 and 2008 Best Seller Lists published by Kyobo Bookstore (Kyobo Bookstores, 2008; 2009).⁷⁶ As mentioned earlier, Kyobo Bookstore is the biggest bookstore in Korea, with a huge online store and twenty-two offline stores. Each year Kyobo Bookstore announces “The 100 bestselling books” list among all genres and “The 20 bestselling books” lists for each genre; EGN is categorized as one of the 21 genres.⁷⁷ Among the 40 books (20 each for 2007 and 2008) I identified the 10 most frequently sold books. Different volumes of the same series were regarded as the same book. For example, I

⁷⁵ *Why? I: Universe* (2008) is a new edition with revised contents. The original was published in 2001 but now it is out-of-print.

⁷⁶ I did not consult the circulation data of children's libraries and school libraries because some of them do not catalogue EGNs; they place EGNs at a separate bookshelf and remove them when they are damaged from frequent use.

⁷⁷ The 21 genres include fiction, non-fiction, Korean novels, foreign novels, children's books, Educational Graphic Novels, books for babies and toddlers, books for women, business and economy, computers, poetry, religion, human studies, politics & social science, health and medicine, culture, art, hobby & utility, foreign language, TOEIC and TOEFL, and technology & engineering (Kyobo Bookstore, 2008; 2009).

regarded *Magic Thousand Characters Text vol. 13* (first rank in 2007 list) and *Magic Thousand Characters Text vol. 16* (first rank in 2008 list) as the same book. I emailed the list of ten books to three elementary school teachers and two elementary school librarians in Seoul, Incheon and Ilsan in Korea. I requested them to ask their students' opinions on these books randomly and casually. Interestingly only two books among the ten received consistently positive comments from the students: The *Magic Thousand Characters Text* series and *Why?* series. Others on the list, such as The *Maple Story: Offline RPG* series (second rank in both 2007 and 2008) was regarded as shallow and trivial reading by many Korean 5th and 6th grade students. The *Survival* series, *Treasure-hunting* series, and *Far Countries, Near Countries* series were considered boring. Many students, however, recommended *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* series to their teachers and school librarians; students insisted that this series is funny and informational at the same time. *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* series began publication in October 2006 and ended in August 2009, for a total of 11 volumes. Considering its publication dates, this series was likely to be familiar to my focus group participants. I needed to find EGNs that many children like to read because participants' fondness and enthusiasm for the selected EGNs was crucial for my focus group research. I needed to hold the children's attention and secure their consistent participation in my focus group study. Therefore *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* was added to my group discussion materials in addition to *Magic Thousand Characters Text* and *Why?* I decided to use the first volumes of the three series books in order to maintain consistency. Table 2 presents the list of the three EGNs used for the focus group study.

Title	Publisher	Year Published	Subject Matter
<i>Magic Thousand Characters Text I: Blow Baram Pung</i>	Owlbook	2003	Chinese Characters ⁷⁸
<i>Why? I: Universe</i>	Yerimdang	2001	Science
<i>Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base</i>	I-Seum	2006	Science

Table 2. Educational Graphic Novels Used for the Focus Group Discussions

Basic information and plot of selected discussion materials

Magic Thousand Characters Text

Magic Thousand Characters Text is a series that has published 20 volumes⁷⁹ so far. It is based on the classic Chinese literature *Journey to the West* (西遊記). As the title indicates, it is a fantasy, using Chinese characters.⁸⁰ Primary and secondary characters in this book use Chinese characters magic to compete with the opponents. For example, one may call out “Water” and writes the character (水; ideogram) in the air to use the “water(水)” magic. In each volume 20 Chinese characters are introduced so that children will naturally learn those 20 Chinese characters in the course of reading the book. Below is the plot of this series book:

Three thousand years ago 108 monsters were locked in the Magic Thousand Characters Text monument as a punishment for disrupting the world, and Heaven ordered twelve gods to

⁷⁸ Teaching Chinese characters to young children has been a controversial issue in Korea for over 60 years. Those who propose teaching Chinese characters to children insist that learning Chinese characters is essential in understanding Korean language because 70% of Korean vocabularies come from old Chinese characters. Those who oppose teaching Chinese characters at an early age argue that Hangeul, the native alphabet of Korean language has developed as a complete communication method without the help of Chinese characters. Some also argue that Hangeul is more appropriate language to use in the digital environment. Despite these controversies, getting a certificate at Chinese character examinations has recently become popular among elementary school children (Hangeulro, 2007; Lee, C., 2011; Park, C., 2002).

⁷⁹ Volume 20 was published in January 2012.

⁸⁰ *Journey to the West* (西遊記) is classic literature that was written in the 6th century in China. It has long been acknowledged as an introductory textbook to Chinese characters in Korea.

guard the monument, but the Great Demon King – lord of the evil side – lured those gods to rebel against Heaven. The evil side, however, is defeated by the Heaven and the Great Demon King is locked in the Magic Thousand Characters Text monument. After the war is over, the prince of Heaven who fought alone against the evil side becomes weak. 20 days later insanity entered his spirit and the prince changed to an evil being: his name is now Hon-Seh Demon King. In order to wake up the Great Demon King, Hon-Seh Demon King destroyed the Magic Thousand Characters Text monument. Now the fragments of the Magic Thousand Characters Text monument, which contain the 108 monsters' spirits, are spread all over the world. Whoever wears a fragment becomes powerfully evil and when the fragments are brought together the Great Demon King will resurrect. Son-O-gong (the Monkey King), Sam-Jang, and their friends are apprentices of Master Barley and Master Rice. They learn Magic Thousand Characters Text magic from these masters. They go on a journey to fight the evil beings and collect the Magic Thousand Characters Text monument fragments. During the journey they discover the various intertwined relationships between the Heaven side and the Evil side. While going through all the difficulties and conflicts together, they learn the value of friendship and love.



Figure 4. A Page from the *Magic Thousand Characters Text EGN*⁸¹

Why?

The complete series of *Why?* consists of 51 volumes⁸². Each volume focuses on one science topic. The topics include weather, life sciences, food and nutrition, reptiles and amphibians, the human body, electricity and electrons, and life sciences. Although each volume contains a different topic, two primary characters – Gom-Ji and Om-Ji – always appear in each volume and go on science journeys together. *Why?: Universe* is the first volume of the *Why?* series. In *Why? I: Universe*, Om-Ji (girl), Gom-Ji (boy; Om-Ji's friend), Dr. Cheon (Om-Ji's father), Agent Hana (Dr. Cheon's cyborg assistant), and Wu-Kae-Bi (an alien from the Andromeda) board a spaceship together and travel the universe. They visit or observe stars,

⁸¹ http://www.openkid.co.kr/book/view.aspx?book_code=B_CAAFAFBC0007

⁸² Volume 51 was published in February 2011.

planets, comets, the sun and a black hole. Detailed scientific information is provided through conversations by the characters or in separate illustrations.



Figure 5. A Page from the *Why? EGN*⁸³

Tomorrow's King of Experiment

Tomorrow's King of Experiment series is described as “science experiment competition comics” (Komdolee, 2006). The primary characters are students who are members of an experiment club at Sae-Byuk elementary school. Each volume deals with a different science topic. Topics include electricity, environment, light, power, and weather. The primary characters meet different competitors or come across different experimental subjects in each volume. Thus, 20 volumes have been published⁸⁴. Scientific knowledge is naturally introduced through the

⁸³ http://www.openkid.co.kr/book/view.aspx?book_code=B_CAAIBABA0006

⁸⁴ Volume 20 was published in January 2012.

experimental activities of the characters. Detailed experimental processes are often presented as separate illustrations or appendices. Below is the plot of the first volume, *Tomorrow's King of Experiment: Competition between Acidity and Base*:

Bum Woo-Joo⁸⁵ (boy) is a secret admirer of Na Ran-Ee (girl). Na Ran-Ee, however, has a one-sided love for Kang Won-So (boy). Kang Won-So is the smartest student at school, while Bum Woo-Joo is always a trouble-maker, although he has great potential for science experimentation. When a new teacher comes to lead the experiment club at Sae-Byuk elementary school, the three children join the club. One day, their neighboring elementary school's experiment club members approach and suggest an experiment competition. The competition receives the attention of all students and teachers in both schools. In front of everyone, the two teams must solve one experiment task: separating each of the materials included in the mixture of sand, iron powder, salt and naphthalene contained in a beaker.

⁸⁵ The characters' names represent scientific terms. For example, Bum Woo-Joo means 'all universe' and Won-So means 'element.' Sae-Byuk elementary school experiment club teacher's name is Kah-Seol, which means 'hypothesis' in Korean.



Figure 6. A Page from the *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* EGN⁸⁶

Running the focus group

Because of the snowball sampling method, most participating children knew one another in the group fairly well. Therefore, the time “needed for the children to get to know each other, develop[ing] relationships of trust” (Coad & Evans, 2008, p. 50) prior to the discussion sessions was minimal. I was more concerned about the relationship between the participating children and me. Many scholars emphasize the importance of the researcher’s role in conducting research with children (Christensen, 2004, p. 165; Coad & Evans, 2008, p. 49; Fine & Sandstrom, 1988, p. 13, 26; James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998, p. 183). Fine and Sandstrom say that an adult researcher with a group of children “cannot pass unnoticed” because of the adult authority that comes from the power dynamic and hierarchy of age groups in society (1988, p. 13). Christensen indicates

⁸⁶ http://www.openkid.co.kr/book/view.aspx?book_code=B_CAAHAFBI0018

that “a researcher who wants to spend time with and around the children will ... very easily be seen by the children as intimidating and overpowering” (2004, p. 169). She suggests that understanding children’s social and cultural worlds, as well as attentively listening to children, is important in research with children (2004, pp. 169-171). As Korean is the mother tongue for all of the participating children and me, the focus groups were conducted in Korean. Prior to the actual group discussions, I made myself familiar with current Korean children’s culture and their language use by watching children’s media and websites and by gathering information from my friends in Korea who had children in this age range. The fact that I am a Korean who was born and raised in that country was helpful. Moreover, the fact that I am a comics reader and find comics – including EGNs – enjoyable also facilitated my endeavor to be familiar with these materials and children’s culture. I did not, however, pretend to be “so cool” as to use their idiomatic slang and imitate their youth culture. Rather, I presented myself as “an unusual type of adult, one who is seriously interested in understanding how the social world [the EGN phenomenon] looks from children’s perspective” and learning from the children, “but without making a dubious attempt to be a child” (Christensen, 2004, p. 174).

My efforts to look friendly to children seemed to be effective. On the first days of each group discussion, I gave children several name choices to call me – Ajumma⁸⁷ (meaning Ms. Lim), Imo⁸⁸ (meaning aunt), or just “hey!” Surprisingly, many girl participants called me Unni⁸⁹ (meaning older sister) even though I did not mention that word. Some boy participants called me

⁸⁷ Ajumma is a term typically used to call a married woman in Korea. Generally children call their friends’ mothers Ajumma.

⁸⁸ Imo is a term used to call a mother’s sister in Korea. It is sometimes used to call a woman who is very close to one’s mother. As I was very close to some of the children’s mothers, these children used to call me Imo before the focus group sessions. They kept calling me Imo but sometimes found it confusing because other participants called me Unni or Nuna.

⁸⁹ Unni is a term that is used when a female addresses her older sister in Korea. It is also used when a female addresses another female who is older than she is, regardless of blood relation. It is often used to indicate a close relationship.

Nuna⁹⁰ (meaning older sister as well). I was surprised because Unni and Nuna are only used to call someone who does not have much age difference from a person. The fact that I am about ten years younger than the children's mothers and that I look younger than my age could be one reason for their calling me Unni or Nuna. However, considering that the children knew I was an adult, this could be interpreted as an indication of children's feeling comfortable and relaxed in the focus group environment.

Being born, reared, and educated in Korea until college and being a comics reader make me an insider to Korean culture, particularly the culture of Korean comics. On the other hand, at the time of the focus group interviews, I have had been living and studying in the U.S. for about seven years, which makes me an outsider to contemporary Korean culture. In addition, being an adult automatically positions me in the role of an outsider in focus groups with children.

According to Barton, "[c]ultural insiders are more likely to share the meanings of participants in a study than are outsiders. However, they are also more likely to overlook much that they have taken for granted in their familiar setting. Culture outsiders have not been socialized to cultural meanings, but they do have the advantage of coming to a setting with fresh eyes" (2006, p. 146). Therefore, the fact that I have both insider and outsider perspectives is an advantage in conducting this research.

Scholars insist that two people are needed to ensure the smooth operation of the focus group. While the first individual – a moderator – concentrates on stimulating and maintaining discussion among the participants, the second individual – an assistant moderator – takes care of the housekeeping tasks such as operating the audio recorder, handling the environmental conditions and logistics (refreshments, lighting and seating), responding to unexpected

⁹⁰ Nuna is a term that is used when a male addresses his older sister in Korea. It is also used when a male addresses a female who is older than he is, regardless of blood relation. It is often used to indicate a close relationship.

interruptions and taking comprehensive notes (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 89; Krueger & Morgan, 1998, p. 53). Min, who is a researcher in engineering, was my assistant moderator for focus group sessions of the first and second groups. Daheui Chung, who majored in statistics in college and was preparing for the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) at that time, was my assistant moderator for focus group sessions of the third group.⁹¹ Also, the third group was a girls-only group so it would be more appropriate for a female to be an assistant.

The groups

As mentioned earlier, I conducted three focus groups. The first group (Group I) consisted of one girl and four boys. The second (Group II) group had two girls and three boys. The third group (Group III) had four girls. Focus group discussions with Group I and Group II were conducted almost simultaneously in March and April, 2010 – Group I met every Saturday morning and Group II met every Saturday afternoon. Focus group discussions with Group III were conducted in November and December, 2010. Each group met four times. Each meeting was about 60 minutes long. According to Hennessy and Heary, although a single-sex focus group is most recommended when conducting focus group research with children, mixed-gender groups may work equally well when the participating children are familiar with each other (2005, p. 241). DeLucia-Waack says that mixed-gender groups may “work well up until early middle school, when gender pressures set in” (2006, p. 19). Most children who live in University Village of UC Berkeley attended Ocean View Elementary School which is right next to the village.

Many Korean children who went to Ocean View know one another, as there are unofficial

⁹¹ As Min and Daheui Chung were both close to the researcher, and because they became increasingly familiar with this research while participating in the focus groups as assistant moderators, they may not be independent enough to look at the research from an objective perspective. Therefore, they did not participate in the inter-coder reliability test.

gatherings of Korean parents in the UC Village and children who do not speak fluent English are likely to be close to one another. Likewise, children of Korean visiting scholars living in Walnut Creek are likely to know one another quite well. Studies on children and their EGN reading behavior do not reveal any significant gender differences (Kang & Jeong, 2009; Kim, J., 2005; Lee, J., 2005) and I had no reason to believe gender would have an impact on the results. Therefore, when recruiting participants for Group I and Group II, I did not pay attention to the ratio of gender within a group. However, while running the sessions with Group I, I recognized that the only girl in the group participated very little in the discussions even though she was an outgoing and cheerful girl. Therefore, I decided to include only girls in the third focus group. Table 3 presents the descriptions of the three groups of fourteen participants. All names are pseudonyms assigned by the researcher.

As mentioned earlier, the literature suggests that three or four focus groups are necessary in order to achieve saturation. Saturation is “a term used to describe the point when you have heard the range of ideas and aren’t getting new information” (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 26). In other words, when you reach the point that you are not learning anything new from the different focus groups, you can say you reached saturation with the focus group interviews. In this research, I reached saturation when I found that the third focus group – girls-only group – revealed that they have the same EGN reading patterns as the boys have: The children of all three focus groups demonstrated that they read EGNs in order to have fun, not to gain information.

Group	Name	Grade (in U.S. school)	Age	Gender
I	Jae-Hee	4	8	Boy
	Yoo-Bin	4	8	Girl
	Yoon-Ho	5	9	Boy
	Dong-Hoon	6	10	Boy
	Joo-Young	6	11	Boy
II	Sung-Min	2	7	Boy
	Joon-Ha	2	7	Boy
	Ha-Yoon	3	8	Girl
	Soo-Min	5	10	Girl
	Hee-Joon	6	11	Boy
III	Jee-Won	2	7	Girl
	Min-Suh	4	9	Girl
	Joo-Hee	4	9	Girl
	Yoo-Jin	4	9	Girl

Table 3. Information on Focus Group Participants.

In Group I, all children except Yoon-Ho went to the same elementary school. Yoon-Ho and Joo-Young were family friends, although they cannot be regarded as best friends. Yoo-Bin and Dong-Hoon are siblings. Jae-Hee was a very close friend of Yoo-Bin and Dong-Hoon. Unlike other children in Group I, Jae-Hee had all volumes of the *Why?* series at home in the U.S. When Jae-Hee's family came to live in the U.S. for one year, they decided to bring all the books that might be useful to their children's education. The *Why?* series was among them. Jae-Hee was an avid reader; his reading was not limited to EGNs but included other types of children's books – both in Korean and English. Joo-Young was a shy boy. At first he was reluctant to participate in the focus group discussion, but once he knew that it was about Educational Graphic Novels he became very excited and immediately decided to participate. He was particularly

excited that he could receive three Educational Graphic Novels as a gift. Yoo-Bin and Dong-Hoon saw the recruiting posting on the bulletin board of the University Village Community Center and asked their mother if they could participate in the focus group discussion.

In Group II, Sung-Min, Soo-Min, Joon-Ha and Ha-Yoon were family friends. Sung-Min and Soo-Min were siblings and Joon-Ha and Ha-Yoon were siblings. When Ha-Yoon was told by her father about the focus group discussion, her first reaction was to reject it. Her daily schedule was already full of lots of tutoring and she thought this was just another type of instruction. She told Joon-Ha, Sung-Min and Soo-Min that the focus group would be a boring and demanding task; all four children were reluctant to participate in the discussion sessions. However, when I met Ha-Yoon and Joon-Ha, explained the group discussions in more detail and showed them EGNs, both children suddenly became extremely excited. They were thrilled to know that this was not something about studying, and that they would be reading EGNs – their favorite – not in English but in Korean. Hee-Joon was the oldest among the group and he was reaching puberty. He looked as if he was thinking that this focus group discussion was kid-stuff. He showed little interest in the group discussion but attended nonetheless.

In Group III, Min-Suh, Joo-Hee and Yoo-Jin were best friends. The three of them were always together not only at school but also after school. Jee-Won was Joo-Hee and Min-Suh's neighbor. Jee-Won seemed to be overwhelmed by being with three older girls at first, but gradually gained confidence in talking and expressing herself. Min-Suh was especially good at taking care of Jee-Won. These girls actively participated in the discussion. They wanted to know the purpose of my study and wanted to help as much as they could. They brought their own Nintendo DS with *Magic Thousand Characters Text* program inside and taught me how to play

the game. Yoo-Jin even offered to lend me the device for a week.⁹² Yoo-Jin and Joo-Hee often mentioned that they really liked coming to the sessions.

Data collection procedures

I met each group four times – once every week. Each session was about an hour long. At the end of sessions 1, 2, and 3, each child received a copy of the EGN we would be discussing during our next meeting. Each child read the book at home, brought it to the next session and discussed the book together with other children in the group. For example, at the end of Week 1 session, all children were given *Magic Thousand Characters Text I: Blow Baram Pung* and they participated in a discussion about that particular title at Week 2 session. In addition to reading and discussing EGNs, fun activities were also implemented each week. Playing some parts of two animated cartoons that are related to the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN (Week 2), the drawing activity after discussing the *Why? I: Universe* EGN (Week 3) and the quiz competition based on the *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base* EGN (Week 4) were planned and conducted in order to engage children more actively in the focus group discussions. An hour of discussion on one particular subject can be a monotonous and tiring experience for elementary school children. Therefore, by including these fun activities, I attempted to make children feel more comfortable and motivated, thus more actively engage in the discussions on EGNs. When all four sessions were completed, children were given the book they had read for this research as a present. Below is a detailed description of the focus group schedule.

⁹² I did not accept her suggestion because Nintendo DS is an expensive device (more than \$100) and I did not feel comfortable borrowing a participating child's possession without her parents' permission.

Week 1: Free conversation about EGNs in General

In the first week, I introduced the purpose of the study and explained how the sessions would run during the four weeks. I tried to answer all questions from children. Children were mostly amazed at the fact that there was no assignment or homework from this activity. They were also surprised that the only thing they were obliged to do was to read Educational Graphic Novels, which they liked to read for pleasure. The children expressed their curiosity about my personal life as well or showed interest in my apparel outfit, such as my earrings or skirt. As these conversations went on, I built rapport with the children. I let children talk freely about their experience or opinions on Educational Graphic Novels. I also let them talk about their reading preferences including general children's books. In all groups I had to establish a ground rule, which was to raise hands before speaking, because sometimes children became excited and spoke in loud voices simultaneously. Below is the list of questions I asked children during the conversations:

- Tell me what you think about EGNs.
- If you like them, what do you like about them?
- If you don't like them, what do you dislike about them?
- Do your friends read EGNs? What do they tell you about EGNs?
- Have you ever recommended an EGN to your friend or vice versa?
- What do your parents say about your reading EGNs?
- Does EGN reading have any influence on your school work?
- Did your school teacher in Korea mention anything about EGNs?
- In Korea, where did you get access to EGNs? – e.g., public library, school library, local bookstore, parents buy them for you, borrow from friends, etc.

- What are the titles you liked or disliked? Can you tell me why?
- Do you read other comic books?
- Do you read regular children's books⁹³?
- Do you watch TV or play video games?
- Tell me what you think about the differences and similarities among EGNs, other comic books, and non comic books (regular children's books).
- Do you think you will keep reading EGNs when you enter a junior-high school?

Week 2: Discussion on *Magic Thousand Characters Text I: Blow Baram Pung* (2004)

Children discussed what they liked or disliked about *Magic Thousand Characters Text I: Blow Baram Pung*. I asked if there was any particular chapter, character, text, or illustration that was memorable to them. I also asked if they would recommend reading the EGN to any child or adult who has not read it yet. After this discussion, the children watched some parts of two animated cartoons⁹⁴ that are related to *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN. One is *Magic Thousand Characters Text Digital Book Vol.1* and the other is *Taegeuk (the Yin and Yang) Thousand Characters*. *Magic Thousand Characters Text Digital Book* is simply a digital version of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN, published by the same publisher. It was distributed in DVD format. That is, every page of the EGN is scanned and presented with a little bit of motion – e.g., the characters move their lips while talking – while the narrators read the text in the EGN aloud just like they do in the audio books. The sound effects such as “Yikes” or “Wow” or the

⁹³ In this research, I refer to “regular children's books” as children's books that are not comic books or EGNs. Therefore, children's novels, children's non-fiction books, and children's picture books are all included in the “regular children's books” category in this research.

⁹⁴ Animated Cartoon means “a motion picture that is made from a series of drawings, computer graphics, or photographs of inanimate objects (as puppets) and that simulates movement by slight progressive changes in each frame” (Merriam-Webster Online, n.d.).

sound of thunderstorms are also added. *Taegeuk (the Yin and Yang) Thousand Characters* is a TV animated cartoon that was broadcast from April 2007 to January 2008 at KBS (Korean Broadcasting System), the biggest TV network in South Korea. It is a collaborative work by several institutions and companies in Korea and an animation company in Japan. The basic storyline of *Taegeuk (the Yin and Yang) Thousand Characters* is very similar to that of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*: searching for the lost Thousand Characters cards in order to restore the peace of the world.⁹⁵ After we watched the two animated cartoons, I asked the children to discuss the differences and similarities of the three different formats and to compare these three different formats that contain very similar content – in order to answer my third research question regarding media convergence and new media literacy in children’s culture.

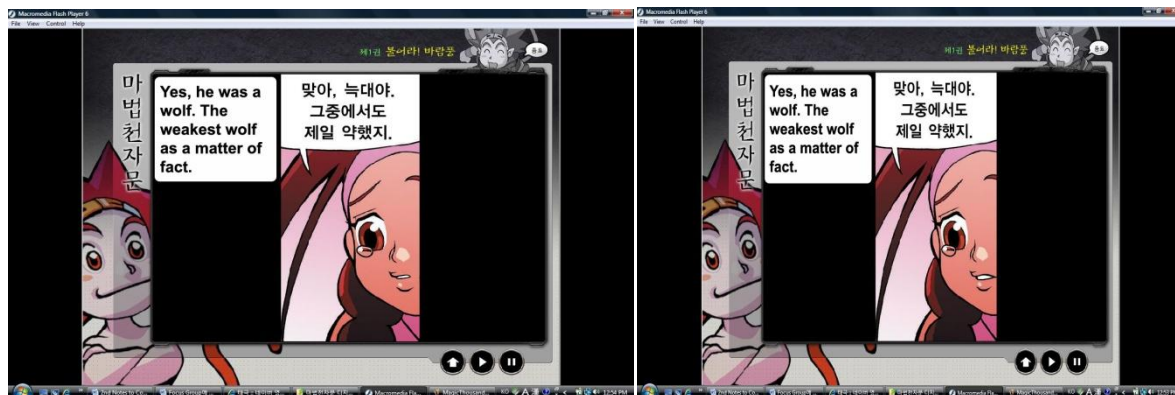


Figure 7. Screen Shots from the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* Digital Book⁹⁶

⁹⁵ A detailed plot of *Taegeuk (the Yin and Yang) Thousand Characters* is presented in the appendix.

⁹⁶ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Book21.



Figure 8. A Screen Shot from the *Taegeuk (the Yin and Yang) Thousand Characters* TV Animation⁹⁷

Week 3: Discussion on *Why? I: Universe* (2008)

Children discussed what they liked or disliked about *Why? I: Universe*. *Why? I: Universe* explains our universe – including stars, planets, nebulae, black holes, and how humans have been observing, studying, and approaching the universe – in as great detail as regular non-fiction books. I asked children if there was any particular chapter, character, text, or illustration that they liked or disliked. I also asked if they would recommend it to a child or adult who has not read it yet. Then I asked children to imagine that they were given a chance to travel in the universe. I asked them to pick one star/planet/nebula/etc. and draw a picture of themselves traveling to that particular place. I told them it would be nice if they could make a story – like a cartoon – although it was not mandatory. I initiated this activity because I wanted to see if children would use any information they had learned from reading *Why? I: Universe*.

⁹⁷ http://www.kids17.net/program/program_genre_detail.asp?no=80

Week 4: Discussion on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base* (2006)

Children discussed what they liked or disliked about *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base*. I asked the children if there was any particular chapter, character, text, or illustration that was impressive to them. I also asked if they would recommend reading it to a child or adult who had not read it yet. *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* is not very different from general comics in terms of story structure, character design, and exaggerated illustration and humor. Scientific information is naturally presented. I was curious what kind of information children found most memorable from this EGN – scientific information or funny details? In order to answer this question, I made a set of quizzes consisting of eight questions on scientific information and nine questions on other details such as humor, puns, or trivial facts about the characters.

Parents not interviewed

Although I explained my research to parents and got their consents, I decided not to conduct interviews with parents because “[n]egotiating interview privacy is a delicate matter” in a project “where researchers may be talking to family members together or separately” (Daly, as cited in Mauthner, 1997, p. 18). Moreover, many studies indicate that “adults – including parents – who see themselves as ‘protecting’ children” may think that children do not need privacy at all (Holland, Mauthner & Sharpe; Brannen & O’Brien; Brannen et al., as cited in Mauthner, 1997, p. 18).

Voices of Adults – Interviews with Teachers and Librarians

EGNs are part of the most library collections in school libraries and public libraries in Korea. Therefore elementary school teachers, public children's librarians and school librarians are close witnesses of children's use of EGNs in their daily lives. They are also responsible for children's reading education. Therefore, listening to their voices is important in analyzing issues around EGNs. I interviewed through email and phone four elementary school teachers and six librarians who work with children from ages 7 to 11 in Seoul and the surrounding suburbs. As these participants need to observe current Korean children's daily activities and reading behaviors, I only contacted those who were living and working in Korea. Below is the list of typical questions I asked the interviewees:

- When did you start working with children in your school/library? Do you have other experience working with children?
- What has been your experience with EGNs (in your library)?
- Do your students or library users read EGNs?
- (To the librarians) Do you have EGNs in your library collection? How much space is devoted to EGNs, compared to the entire library collection/children's library collection/other type of books? Do you have a separate shelf for EGNs?
- (To the teachers) Do you allow students to read EGNs during the morning reading hours in your class? (*Many Korean elementary schools enforce 'morning reading,' which encourages children to read at least 10 minutes a day. Students may read any books they want, but in some classrooms EGNs are excluded.)
- How popular are EGNs, do you think? What do you see as positive and/or negative aspects of the enormous popularity of EGNs in general?

- If you approve of EGNs, what are the main reasons? Is there any particular title you want to recommend to children?
- If you disapprove of EGNs, what are the main reasons?
- Why do you think EGNs are popular among children?
- What do other teachers/librarians around you say about EGNs?
- What do you see as positive and/or negative aspects of the popularity of EGNs among the children you work with?
- Have you had any interesting experience or conflicts with children/parents regarding EGNs?
- When you were young, did you read EGNs? Do you read them now?
- Tell me what you see as the differences and similarities among EGNs, other comic books, and regular children's books.

Snowball sampling

In recruiting the teachers and librarians, I used the snowball sampling method. I had an acquaintance with an elementary school teacher whose school library was well managed by a competent school librarian. I contacted the school librarian and asked her to refer me to other school librarians. She introduced me to another school librarian who worked in an elementary school. I was also acquainted with several more elementary school teachers. I contacted them and asked if they were interested in participating in this research. Two responded with positive answers and one introduced her colleague – whom she thought might be more suitable – instead of herself being my interviewee. I also asked the teachers whether or not their schools had school

librarians. If they had, I asked them to refer me to the librarians. Through this process I was able to interview four elementary school teachers and five elementary school librarians.

I used this method because not all elementary schools in Korea have school libraries, and only some of them hire school librarians with a school librarian certificate. In Korea, the general way to be a librarian is to graduate from a four-year college, with a major in Library and Information Science. In order to get school librarian certification one takes credits from the Education Department during college years (Kwack, 2009, p. 351). According to statistics published by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Korea, 94% of Korean schools – including elementary, middle, and high schools – have school libraries (as cited in Cho, M. A., 2009, p. 500). However, Cho Mi-Ah points out that among the 11,173 schools, only 5.77% (657 schools) have full-time certified school librarians (2009, p. 501). The situation in elementary schools is worse; among 5,813 elementary schools in Korea, only 3.6% (209 schools) have full-time certified school librarians. Other school libraries are staffed by a part-time librarian who may or may not have school librarian certification or by one of the classroom teachers who is also assigned to the library (Cho, M. A., 2009, p. 502; Lee, J., 2003, p. 106). Many certified school librarians who have great potential as school librarians are hired part-time, receiving a low salary and unfavorable treatment from the school. In fact, many teachers do not acknowledge school librarians – either full-timers or part-timers – as colleagues but simply as someone who helps children's reading as do parents or volunteers (Cho, M. A., 2009, p. 503; Lee, J., 2003, p. 102). As being hired part-time does not mean that the school librarian is not qualified,

I did not exclude part-timers from my participants as long as they spent many hours in a school library every day.⁹⁸

To recruit public librarians I contacted eleven public librarians I interviewed for my 2007 independent study about Korean children's libraries. From these interviews, I learned that many public libraries do not have librarians with library school degrees in children's services, and the reference desk of a children's room is staffed by public service employees or part-time volunteers. Therefore I contacted the public librarians that I interviewed in 2007 and asked if they would like to participate in this research. Some had left their jobs and some could not be reached. Ultimately, only one public librarian responded and participated in this research. Table 4 shows the teachers' and librarians' work experience with children and the social classes of children they work with every day. All interviewees were female because the professions of teacher and librarian are both female dominated in Korea.

⁹⁸ In fact, many part-time school librarians work 9am to 5pm, five days a week, which is the same as full-time school librarians (Bum Kyung-Hwa, personal communication, July 20, 2009). Bum is a certified school librarian who works part-time at Ho-Su Elementary School in Ilsan, Korea.

	Nickname	Work Experience with Children	Student/Library Patrons' Social Class ⁹⁹	Gender
Elementary School Teachers	Ms. Yoon	10 years	Upper middle	Female
	Mrs. Lee	16 years	Lower Middle	Female
	Mrs. Han	6 years	Lower middle	Female
	Mrs. Shin	5 years	Lower	Female
School Librarians	Ms. Jeong	4 years	Upper middle	Female
	Ms. Choi	9 years	Lower middle	Female
	Ms. Kim	9 years	Lower middle	Female
	Ms. Song	5 years	Lower middle	Female
	Ms. Moon	3 ½ years	N/A	Female
Public Librarian	Mrs. Park	17 years	Lower middle	Female

Table 4. Information on Interview Participants (Teachers and Librarians)

The interview

The interviews with teachers and librarians were conducted from May 2010 to October 2010. Each participant decided whether she wanted to be interviewed via telephone or email. Among ten interviewees, four people selected phone interviews and six people selected email interviews. The interviews were conducted in Korean. The phone interviews were about one hour per each interviewee. The email interviews included more than one session – i.e., when there was a particular topic in the first email response I asked for more detailed explanation about it. On average two or three email responses were obtained from each interviewee. I also completed field notes to complement the audio-recordings. The recorded conversations were

⁹⁹ This classification of social class is based on sociologists William Thompson and Joseph Hickey's definition on social classes in 2005. According to Thompson and Hickey, the upper middle class refers to "[p]rofessionals with a graduate degree" and "make \$72,500 to \$100,000"; the lower middle class "has a bachelor's degree" and "works in professional support and sales, and makes between \$32,000 and \$50,000"; the lower class "has a high school education, makes \$7,000 a year, and is either unemployed or works only part-time" (Denby & Welch, 2009, p. 193).

transcribed and sent back to the participants to make certain that the transcripts were accurately reflected what they meant during the interviews. Then the transcriptions were translated into English. The email interviews were also transcribed in Korean and then translated into English.

Unexpected data collected

One of the teachers that I interviewed (Mrs. Lee) became very interested afterwards in children's reading of Educational Graphic Novels. She mentioned that she could not understand why she had never considered what children were reading for pleasure. As EGNs were irrelevant to classroom teaching, they were not of interest to her until I interviewed her. A month after the interview, Mrs. Lee emailed me with an attachment file, which was a summary and scanned images of her survey of her students in her classroom – thirty-two 3rd grade students. She made a questionnaire with six simple questions¹⁰⁰ in order to know more about her students' pleasure reading. She said although this survey was done to satisfy her own curiosity, it might be also helpful to my research. This survey result provided useful data when I analyzed children's preferences for Educational Graphic Novels and informed my analysis in chapter 4.

Observation of Children's Reading in the Classroom, School Library and Public Library

School is a place where most Korean children spend a large portion of their daily lives. Particularly, children's in-school reading commonly takes place in the classroom and the school library. The public library is another place where one can observe children's reading. Therefore, in order to learn more about children's EGN reading behavior, I visited an elementary school's

¹⁰⁰ The questions were: (1) Which do you prefer – EGNs or regular children's book?; (2) (If you prefer reading EGNs) Why do you prefer reading EGNs?; (3) (If you prefer reading regular children's books) Why do you prefer reading regular children's books?; (4) What was your favorite summer reading book this year?; (5) Please name the title(s) of the book(s) you have recently read or are reading now; (6) How many EGNs and/or regular children's books do you read in a week on average?

school library, a classroom, and a public library's children's room in Korea and observed children's reading activities.

Convenient sampling

The research locations for observation of children's reading were selected based on convenient sampling method. Convenient sampling is "the selection of a sample of participants from a population based on how convenient and readily available that group of participants is" (Salkind, 2010, p. 254). It is often used when researchers want to include people who are willing to participate in the research or who can be easily recruited (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 230; Thyer, 2001, p. 546). After conducting the interviews with teachers and librarians, several interviewees showed great interest in my research and told me to contact them if I needed any further help in terms of research. Among them were Mrs. Lee, an elementary school teacher, and Ms. Choi, a school librarian. Mrs. Lee and Ms. Choi both worked at Crayon Elementary School. Observing children's reading at a school library and a classroom that are located in the same school would give a researcher an opportunity to see how children use each location for their reading activity. Therefore, I chose to conduct an observation at Crayon Elementary School. For observation at a public library, Timber Public Library was selected for convenience: it was in the same town as Crayon Elementary School.

Research locations

Crayon Elementary School is located in a lower middle class residential area in one of the satellite cities of Seoul. About 1,000 students are enrolled in Crayon Elementary School, from first grade through sixth grade. There were five or six classrooms for each grade level. The

number of students in a classroom was 28 on average. Mrs. Lee¹⁰¹ was a fourth grade teacher at the time I visited her classroom for observation research. Therefore the students I observed in her classroom were fourth graders.

The school library in Crayon Elementary School allowed students to check out two books per week. They could borrow any book from the library collection, including the EGNs and general comic books.

Timber Public Library was located in a lower middle class residential area in one of the satellite cities¹⁰² of Seoul. It was one of the branches of a city library system. The library's collection encompassed over 166,638 books and 2,362 DVDs, with some other media collections. The children's room of Timber Public Library was in the basement of the library building. Children were able to check out three books – including EGNs and general comic books – for two weeks.

Crayon Elementary School is a typical elementary school in Korea in terms of its size – e.g., student number, class size. In Korea, a centralized administration oversees the whole process for the education, from kindergarten to the third year of high school. There are six grades (from first grade to sixth grade) in most elementary schools – both public and private. Sometimes a kindergarten is located next to the elementary school building, but they are usually run separately, even though they share the same name¹⁰³. Because the Korean education is governed by a centralized administration, the number of schools in a town is also controlled by the central administration. For example, if there has been one elementary school in a particular town, but

¹⁰¹ Mrs. Lee was a third grade teacher when I interviewed her via telephone. In Korea, elementary school teachers teach different grades each year. For example, Mrs. Lee taught third graders in 2010 and fourth graders in 2011. All elementary school teachers in Korea are eligible to teach all subjects for all grades except for few subjects including English.

¹⁰² Satellite cities are smaller cities that are next to a large city that is the center of a metropolitan area.

¹⁰³ For example, Crayon Elementary School was next to Crayon Kindergarten.

suddenly the elementary school-aged children's population doubles, the government establishes another elementary school to accommodate incoming school-aged children. Korean population is focused on Seoul (the capital) and its satellite cities. According to a national census conducted in 2010, 43% of the Korean population lives Seoul and its satellite cities (Korean Statistical Information Service, 2010)¹⁰⁴. Therefore, Seoul and its suburbs have more schools than the rural areas. Korea is a racially homogeneous nation. Therefore, the district of residence is usually decided only by the economic class. However, some towns are composed of different economic classes.

Data collection procedures

I visited each research location (Crayon Elementary School's school library, Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom, and Timber Public Library) three times during September 2011. At all three locations, I sat in an unobtrusive place and observed what books children read or checked out. That is, it was an unobtrusive observation.

Unobtrusive observation means that "the observer blends into the observation setting in such a way that the act of observing and recording is by and large not noticeable to those who are being observed" (Rubin & Babbie, 2009, p. 185). I wanted to be unnoticed by the children I would be observing, because I wanted to see their natural reading patterns. The Crayon Elementary School's school library was open to the students' parents. Quite a few mothers visited the school library to read or check out books. Thus, I could be seen as one of the parents in the school library of Crayon Elementary School. I was also able to be seen as a parent at Timber Public Library. The only place I was somewhat noticed was Mrs. Lee's fourth grade

¹⁰⁴ According to this census, the total population of Korea was 47,990,761 in 2010. 9,631,482 people (20%) lived in Seoul and 11,196,053 people (23%) lived in the satellite cities of Seoul.

classroom. I asked Mrs. Lee to introduce me to the students as a graduate student who was interested in children's classroom activity in a random elementary school in Korea. I asked her to introduce me in this way, because, as I said earlier, I wanted to see the children's natural reading patterns. If I said that I was interested particularly in children's EGN reading patterns, the students might have acted differently than usual.

The observation at Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom in Crayon Elementary School was conducted twice a day for three days, which is six times in total. I observed children's reading in the morning and during lunch. In Crayon Elementary School, the first class started at 9 a.m. and the students were encouraged to arrive at school by 8:50 a.m. Many students came to school between 8:20 a.m. and 8:50 a.m. From the time they arrived at school until the class started at 9:00 a.m., students could use their free time. They could either stay in the classroom or go out to other places such as the school library, the hallway, or other classrooms. Lunch time was an hour. Students and the classroom teacher ate their lunch in the classroom together. Many students ate their lunch quickly and spent the rest of the hour doing what they wanted to do. I observed the students who remained in the classroom and read books, including EGNs and regular children's books.

I conducted my observation at the school library in Crayon Elementary School was conducted three times a day for three days, which is nine times in total. In my initial research design, the observation was planned to be conducted twice a day, as in Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom. However, when I arrived at Crayon Elementary School, I found out that the school library and Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom were located very close to each other. They shared one hallway, which made it possible for me to observe both places at the same time. I observed

children's reading in Crayon Elementary School's school library in the morning, during lunch, and after school, for three days.

The observation at Timber Public Library was conducted once a day for three days. Each observation period was done for thirty minutes. I chose to visit Timber Public Library for observation during weekends, because the children's rooms in public libraries are most crowded with children during weekends in Korea. During weekdays, most Korean children go directly to "cram schools" (*hagwon*¹⁰⁵) or are privately tutored after school, so the public libraries are quite empty. Therefore, I visited the children's room in Timber Public Library in the afternoons¹⁰⁶ during weekends.

Data sources from the observation include field notes, reflective notes after each observation, and conversations with Mrs. Lee and Ms. Choi. Because Mrs. Lee and Ms. Choi were my interviewees for the interviews with teachers and librarians for this study, I regarded conversations with them during the observation period as a continuation of my interviews with them. There were neither formal nor informal conversations with the librarian at Timber Public Library, because the librarian was not in the children's room while I observed; there were only three library staff at the circulation desk.

¹⁰⁵ A *hagwon* is similar to private tutoring but the class size varies from fewer than 10 students to more than 300 students. The *hagwon* system is similar to the public school system – usually there is a director, a vice director, and classroom teachers in a *hagwon*, just as there is a principal, a vice principal, and classroom teachers in public schools. It is a very popular outside school education system in Korea.

¹⁰⁶ I chose to visit the library in the afternoon, because many children attended the Sunday schools at church on Sundays. Also, all elementary school students were supposed to go to school on Saturdays every other week in Korea until February 2012 – my observation research was done in September 2011. Now the law has changed: starting March 2012, no elementary school students go to school on Saturdays in Korea.

Content Analysis of Selected Educational Graphic Novels

The contents of the three EGNs that were used at the focus group discussion sessions were analyzed. The titles are *Magic Thousand Characters Text I: Blow Baram Pung* (2004), *Why? I: Universe* (2001), and *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base* (2006) – purposefully selected. The selection criteria are described in detail in Chapter 3, *Voices of Children – Focus Group with Children: Selection of Discussion Materials*. Basically, the selection of these books can be categorized as the “purposive sampling” method. Purposive sampling is a “nonprobability sampling method in which elements are selected for a purpose, usually because of their unique position” (Schutt, 2009, p. 173). Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen indicate that purposive sampling is used when the researcher is concerned about “maximiz[ing] discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and problems that occur in the particular context under study” (1993, p. 82).

Johnson and Christensen indicate that when a researcher uses the purposive sampling method in a study, “the ability to generalize from a sample to a population on the basis of a single study is severely limited” (2008, p. 239). Thus, my selection of the three books I selected may not be an accurate representation of all EGNs in Korea. EGNs cover many topics including mythology and folk tales, history, economics, science, math, foreign language, common sense, reconstruction of classical literature, popular TV dramas or films, horror stories, and school curriculum. In addition, different publishers and different authors/illustrators may describe the topics in completely diverse ways. On the other hand, as the three EGNs were selected based on their popularity, they are guaranteed to contain common elements that appeal to young readers or their parents. The selected EGNs were analyzed based on the criteria informed by the group

discussions with children. How these criteria were obtained and structured will be presented in detail in the next chapter's Axial Coding section.

Data Analysis

As noted earlier, data that were obtained using four different research methods: focus groups with children; individual interviews with teachers and librarians; observations at an elementary school classroom, school library and a public library; and content analysis of the three selected EGNs. The data were thoroughly coded and analyzed following the process of open and axial coding. An inter-coder reliability test was conducted to identify the relative objectivity of my analysis. The technique of *triangulation* and *member checks* was used to increase trustworthiness of this study.

Content Analysis

Data from the focus groups with children, individual interviews with teachers and librarians, observation field notes, and three selected EGNs were examined using content analysis. A broad definition of content analysis is “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages” (Holsti, 1969, p. 14). Traditionally, content analysis has been used as a technique for quantitative research, but now it is often used in qualitative research as well (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 289). In a qualitative content analysis, data is coded qualitatively. According to Charmaz, qualitative coding is different from quantitative coding. She says that while quantitative coding “requires preconceived, logically deduced codes into which the data are placed,” qualitative coding means

“*creating* categories from interpretation of the data.” She also indicates that qualitative coding “has its own distinctive structure, logic and purpose” (1988, p. 111, emphasis by the author).

In order to code and analyze focus group discussions with children, I used the following process. First, I transcribed the recorded audio files of all twelve sessions, including “um” and “yay” and every other expression. Mispronounced words, incorrect grammar, and incorrect word order were all transcribed verbatim, because sometimes children’s excitement or disappointment was reflected in them. When necessary, I made notes to explain what the speaker meant to say using parentheses. Inaudible or unintelligible words or sentences were listened to five times. If they were still undecipherable I placed the word “inaudible” in the transcript. As listening to children’s own voices on Educational Graphic Novels was a major goal of this study, the twelve transcripts from the focus group interviews were regarded as the primary data source. One of the transcripts was selected to check the inter-coder reliability. Then all transcripts were coded and analyzed. A more detailed explanation on the inter-coder reliability test, coding and analysis will be presented later in this chapter.

Telephone interviews with teachers and librarians were also transcribed word for word. Overall, the teachers and librarians’ spoken words and sentences had many fewer mispronounced words or incorrect word order compared to those by the children. The transcripts and the email interview manuscripts were coded and analyzed. Observation field notes and the three selected EGNs were also coded and analyzed.

Coding and Approach to Analysis

Among many approaches to qualitative coding, I followed the process of open and axial coding. Open coding is a coding process for the beginning stage of data analysis (Saldana, 2009,

p. 42). For open coding, a researcher breaks down data into discrete parts, closely examines them, and compares them for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). The goal of open coding is “to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). Axial coding is “[a] set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding¹⁰⁷, by making connections between categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 96). That is, data will be first fractured and categorized through open coding (the initial coding). Then the researcher puts the simply labeled data “back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97). This is a “complex process of inductive and deductive thinking” using a coding paradigm based, interactively, on: causal conditions; phenomenon; context; intervening conditions; action/interaction strategies; and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 99, 114).

I wrote analytic memos during coding processes. Saldana says analytic memos are needed to “document and reflect on: your coding process and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts in your data” (2009, p. 32). He also says that coding and analytic memo writing are “concurrent qualitative data analytic activities” (2009, p. 33). The constant comparative method was applied throughout the data analysis process. To be specific, coded data were constantly compared with other similarly categorized data in order to discover new categories and new relationships between categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Schwandt, 2001, p. 30). This method was appropriate for my research because it is a type of study that develops themes based on the data rather than begins with a theory to prove or disprove.

¹⁰⁷ Open coding is the basic analytic step in qualitative coding that breaks down, examines, compares, conceptualizes, and categorizes data through close examination (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, pp. 61-62).

As previously mentioned, focus group interviews with children were conducted in order to elicit voices of children, which is the main emphasis of this research. Thus focus group data were first coded followed by interview data of teachers and librarians, observations and EGN texts. In other words, through the process of open and axial coding of the data from focus groups with children, concepts were detected and classified as categories. These categories were generated purely based on the data, strictly following the process of coding and not affected by the researcher's self-fulfilling prophecy or forecasting what she wanted to find out. These categories were used as criteria in analyzing EGN texts, observations and interviews with teachers and librarians.

Inter-coder Reliability

Inter-coder reliability is widely understood as a critical constituent of content analysis (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002, p. 589; Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 64; Neuendorf, 2002, p. 142). Neuendorf argues, "Given that a goal of content analysis is to identify and record relatively objective (or at least intersubjective) characteristics of messages, reliability is paramount. Without the establishment of reliability, content analysis measures are useless" (2002, p. 141). A simple definition of inter-coder reliability is "levels of agreement among independent coders who code the same content using the same coding instrument" (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997, p. 126). There are many indices that are used to measure inter-coder reliability.¹⁰⁸ A researcher needs to select an index that is appropriate for her research, based on the properties and assumptions of the index and the properties of the data (Lombard, 2004). The Percent Agreement seems to be the most widely used index. It is simple, intuitive, and easy to calculate

¹⁰⁸ The most widely used are Percent Agreement, Holsti's Method, Scott's Pi (π), Cohen's Kappa (K), and Krippendorff's Alpha (α) (Lombard et al., 2002, pp. 590-592).

but has the weakness of sometimes overestimating true inter-coder agreement – e.g., the coder agreement may occur simply by chance (Lombard, 2004; Lombard et al., 2002, p. 590). My data was coded by two coders – Darae Lee and me. Darae Lee has recently graduated with a master's degree in social work at the University of British Columbia in Canada. She is currently working as a social worker at a non-profit immigrant/refugee serving agency in Vancouver, BC Canada. Darae Lee was born and raised in Korea and immigrated to Canada at the age of 20. She speaks, reads, and writes Korean more fluently than English, as Korean is her native language. She was not involved in the research itself, so she was independent enough to bring objectivity to this inter-coder reliability test.

In addition, as my research is relatively small scale my data coding is doable by hand. Thus I chose the Percent Agreement index. The accepted level of inter-coder reliability depends on the research context and the type of information coded. The literature indicates that coefficients of 90% or above are acceptable to all and 80% or above are acceptable in most situations (Lombard et al., 2002, p. 593). As my research involved a certain amount of interpretation I considered 80% or higher as robust. A pilot test preceded the actual coding in order to detect poorly defined categories (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997, pp. 127-128). In the actual inter-coder reliability test, the agreement rate was 91%.

Strategies to Increase Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba assert that qualitative researchers need to establish trustworthiness in order to demonstrate that a study is credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable (1985, pp. 290, 328): they use the concept of trustworthiness in place of validity “as the overarching evaluative standard for field research” (as cited in Bailey, 2007, p. 181). There are a number of

techniques for establishing trustworthiness¹⁰⁹. Among those techniques my research includes the technique of *triangulation* and *member checks*. The technique of triangulation improves the credibility of the data. Denzin suggests four different modes of triangulation: “the use of multiple and different *sources, methods, investigators, and theories*” (as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305; emphasis by the author). I interviewed three focus groups, four elementary school teachers and six children’s/school librarians and observed children in a public elementary school, a school library, and a public library’s children’s room – multiple and different sources. Collecting child participants for the focus groups from two different sites – Berkeley and Walnut Creek – was also one aspect of triangulation. In addition, my research consisted of four different methods: focus groups, interviews, observation, and content analysis of EGNs. Webb et al. say that triangulation by different methods is “very much worth doing, because it makes data believable” (as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 306). Member check involves checking data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions with those “from whom the data were originally collected” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). It is acknowledged as the most important technique for establishing credibility. I applied this technique when interviewing teachers and librarians. After each interview was done I transcribed the recorded conversations and sent them back to the participants to check whether the transcriptions accurately reflected what they meant at the interviews. These strategies increased the trustworthiness of my research data.

¹⁰⁹ The techniques for establishing trustworthiness include: prolonged engagement; persistent observation; triangulation (sources, methods, investigators, and theories); peer debriefing; negative case analysis; referential adequacy; member checks; thick description; the dependability audit, including the audit trail; the confirmability audit, including the audit trail; and the reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 328).

Limitations

This study has the following limitations. First, the focus group children are from a particular social class – the upper middle class in Korea. At least one of the parents of each child has a Ph.D. degree. Because the parents are highly educated and work in academic fields, these children had relatively more opportunities to access books and other print materials from early ages. Second, only three Educational Graphic Novels were discussed in the focus groups and used for content analysis of the text. Moreover, two of the three EGNs dealt with science themes. As mentioned before, EGNs cover diverse subjects including history, math, and social studies. Selecting only the most popular EGNs was a necessary step for conducting the focus groups, but this can also be a limitation in terms of the comprehensiveness of the study. Third, the observation sites - the elementary school and the public library – are both in lower middle class towns. Moreover, only one of the interviewed teachers and librarians was working in a poor area. However, as this is a qualitative study that focuses on finding out what children, the actual readers, think and how they react to EGNs, these limitations did not compromise the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Description of the EGNs Selected for Use in Focus Group Discussions

In this section, I will describe the details of the three EGNs that were selected for use in focus group discussions. The structures of the EGNs will be explained in detail, and important characters of the EGNs will be introduced. I will also describe the diverse media formats of the three EGNs.

Magic Thousand Characters Text

Learning Chinese characters in Korea

Historically Koreans adopted and used Chinese characters to write the Korean language until Sejong the Great, the fourth king of the Chosŏn Dynasty, created Hangeul in 1443. That is, only after 1443 could Koreans have their own letters that accurately reflected their spoken language. At first, Hangeul was used only among women, peasants, and a few people of noble birth; the majority of the nobility was contemptuous of Hangeul because they thought Chinese characters were more legitimate¹¹⁰. It took several centuries until Hangeul became widely used among all Korean people, regardless of class and gender. In 1894 Hangeul was proclaimed an official national language for writing. However, Chinese characters were still jointly used in transcribing vocabularies, because many people still thought they could understand the meaning

¹¹⁰ This should be understood based on historical context. China (the Ming dynasty) was more powerful country than Korea (the Chosŏn dynasty) at that time. Thus the Chosŏn dynasty served the Ming dynasty as a higher-level country. Although there was seldom a political intervention on Chosŏn's national administration by Ming, Chosŏn had to regularly pay tribute to Ming.

of texts better in Chinese characters than in Hangeul. (See Figure 9 for an example of combined use of Hangeul and Chinese characters – the image on left.) In 1970 the Korean government publicized a policy that encourages using only Hangeul in writing Korean (Gil et al., 2002, p. 369). Since then the proportion of Chinese characters in newspapers, journals, and books has gradually diminished. In 1988 a newspaper, *The Hankyoreh*, launched promoting Hangeul-only publication. (See Figure 9 for an example of *The Hankyoreh*'s Hangeul-only publication – the image on right) Despite the government policy on the use of Hangeul, debates continued between those who insisted on Chinese character education and those who insisted on Hangeul-only education at schools.



Figure 9. Chinese Characters' Use (left; year 1960) and Non-Use (right; year 1999) in Korean Newspapers¹¹¹

In 2002, thirteen former ministers of Education in Korea submitted an application to the Korean government demanding that Chinese characters education be included in the elementary

¹¹¹ Left: Front page of Dong-A Ilbo, published in December 29, 1960. Hangeul and Chinese characters are combined in the article, with more Chinese characters for titles; Right: Front page of The Hankyoreh, published in December 29, 1999. Chinese characters are not used at all. (Images from Naver News Library <http://newslibrary.naver.com>)

school curriculum¹¹² (Editorial, 2002, p. 422; Gil et al., 2002, p. 369). The thirteen former ministers argued that Chinese characters education strengthens Korean language competency because 70%¹¹³ of Korean words originated from Chinese characters. Their opponents argued that learning Chinese characters is unimportant, because Koreans can fully understand the meaning of Hangeul text without knowing any Chinese characters. Choi compared the relationship between Hangeul and Chinese characters to the relationship between English, French, German and Latin (2002, p. 428). For example, although knowing Latin is advantageous in understanding English, Americans with no knowledge of Latin have no problem understanding English.

Some universities would give higher ratings for college admission to students who earned high scores on the Official Hanja (Chinese character) Level Test. Many companies also started giving advantages to applicants who achieved high scores on the Official Hanja Level Test. Some companies even applied the Hanja level test scores to promotion criteria (Editorial, 2002, p. 423). Children's Chinese characters private tutoring became popular among rich communities (Gil et al., 2002, p. 404) and some elementary schools began to teach Chinese characters to students at the principals' discretion (p.370).

Owlbook, the publisher of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, caught hold of the trend to learn Chinese characters by publishing the first volume of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* in 2003. They had observed that Chinese characters self-teaching books for children were not very different from those for adults on the market. In addition, there were no books properly reflecting

¹¹² Chinese characters class was provided as an elective course in middle schools and high schools in 2002. Thus in some cases students did not have any opportunity to learn Chinese characters in their public school education (Kim, Jin, & Lee, 2002, p.397).

¹¹³ Korean language scholar Choi Ki-Ho insisted that this – that 70% of Korean words originated from Chinese characters – is false statistics (2002, p. 428); Choi implied that fewer than 70% of Korean words originated from Chinese characters.

customers' diverse needs and interests in Chinese character learning for children. Therefore, Owlbook focused on creating a book that would both appeal to young readers – thus adopted the comic book format – and satisfy parents' demand for effective Chinese character education (Han et al., 2008, p.16). With support from aggressive and systematic marketing, *Magic Thousand Characters Text* soon became one of the most popular children's book series in Korea¹¹⁴.

Structure and characters of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*

Each volume of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN contains approximately 160 pages. The body of the book is about 150 pages. The other 10 pages consist of useful tips for studying Chinese characters and some fun activities. Below is the structure of *Magic Thousand Characters Text vol.1: Blow Baram Pung*. The other 19 volumes maintain the same structure as volume1.

Structure of *Magic Thousand Characters Text Vol.1: Blow Baram Pung*

- Page1... Half Title
- Page 2... Editor's Note
- Page 3... "Features of the Book"

This page describes distinctive features of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* series. It emphasizes that children will naturally learn Chinese characters while reading this book, without any pressure on memorizing them. It also insists reading this book will encourage children to have confidence in studying Chinese characters.

¹¹⁴ There are a total of 20 books in the series. Volume 20 was published in January 2012. See page 29 for information about the recent sales record of the *Magic Thosuand Characters Text* EGN series.

- Page 4... “Chinese Characters that Appear in this Volume”



Figure 10. Part of Page 4 of *Magic Thousand Characters Text Vol. 1*¹¹⁵

This page displays twenty-one Chinese characters that are introduced in volume 1.

Each Chinese character's shape, meaning, pronunciation, and the page numbers in which this particular character appears in the book are described.

- Page 5... Table of Contents
- Pages 6 and 7... Primary and Secondary characters that Appear in This Volume

Primary characters and secondary characters that appear in volume 1 are introduced. Each character's image, name and characteristics are described.

- Page 8 to 157... Body of the content¹¹⁶
- Pages 158 to 163... “Chase the Magic Hanja!” (Writing Practice)

This section is for Chinese characters writing practice. Each Chinese character's shape, meaning, pronunciation, examples of use of the character, and spaces for

¹¹⁵ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Book21.

¹¹⁶ See page 47 for details.

writing practice are provided. Also noted is the level of difficulty of the particular character according to the Official Hanja (Chinese Character) Level Test¹¹⁷.



Figure 11. Part of Page 158 of *Magic Thousand Characters Text Vol. 1*¹¹⁸

- Pages 164 and 165... “Search for Different Spots!”



Figure 12. Part of Page 164 of *Magic Thousand Characters Text Vol. 1*¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ There are twelve levels in the Official Hanja Level Test.

¹¹⁸ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Book21.

This section presents two nearly identical pictures with seven different spots. For example, the color of Master Rice's hair ribbon may be different from each other in the two different pictures. Or, a particular word's spelling in the word balloon may be different from each other in the two different pictures. (Please refer to the circles in the images above.) During my focus group interviews with children, some children found this activity quite engaging.

- Page 166... “My Own *Magic Thousand Characters Text*”



Figure 13. Part of Page 166 of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* Vol. 1¹²⁰

This page gives children an opportunity to feel like being an author of the book. It provides an illustrated page with blank word balloons so that children can fill out the content as they want. However, based on my focus group interviews, only one of fourteen children did show any interest in this page.

- Page 167... “Catch the Magic Hanja!”

This page presents quizzes in a fun way. The questions give several Korean word choices and ask readers to choose words that use a particular Chinese character¹²¹.

¹¹⁹ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Book21.

¹²⁰ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Book21.

However, like “My Own *Magic Thousand Characters Text*” page, this section did not attract children’s attention in my focus groups.

- Pages 168 and 169... Quizzes

Nine questions are presented. The questions may or may not be related to the knowledge of Chinese characters. Only those who have read the story in the book can answer the questions. For example, question number 2 says: “After being treated with delicious fruits by the monkeys at Hwa-Gua-San, Master Barley presented gold to Son-O-Gong using a thousand characters magic. What was the thousand characters magic that Mater Barley used for this?” The answer to question number 2 is “金” (meaning “gold”). Of course the reader may determine the answer by the context of the question, but the point of the question is geared to whether or not you have read the book.

Primary characters and important secondary characters of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*

As briefly mentioned in Chapter 3, Voices of Children – Focus Group with Children: *Basic Information and Plot of Selected Discussion Materials*, the main plot of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* is to search for the lost Magic Thousand Characters Text fragments. (See page 47 for details.) During their journey to find the fragments the primary characters meet many other characters – both good and evil. In each volume the primary characters confront new enemies they must to fight in order to obtain the broken Chinese characters fragments.

¹²¹ How Chinese characters are used in the Korean language is described in pages 84-86.






Characters on the Good side		
Son-O-Gong (the Monkey King)		<p>Primary character. Hero.</p> <p>Has great potential of thousand characters magic.</p> <p>Simple-minded, faithful and righteous.</p> <p>Gradually matures as the story develops.</p>
Sam-Jang		<p>A smart and brave girl.</p> <p>Very good at thousand characters magic.</p> <p>Wins the championship at thousand characters magic competitions.</p>
Master Barley		<p>Son-O-Gong and Ok-Dong-Ja's master.</p> <p>Great master of thousand characters magic.</p> <p>Hot-tempered but also warm-hearted.</p>
Master Rice		<p>Sam-Jang's master.</p> <p>Great master of thousand characters magic.</p> <p>Calm and collected.</p> <p>Sincerely takes care of Sam-Jang.</p>
Ok-Dong-Ja		<p>Master Barley's apprentice; Son-O-Gong's senior.</p> <p>Looks silly but quite good at using thousand characters magic.</p> <p>In love with Sam-Jang but it is only one-sided love.</p>

Table 5. Characters in *Magic Thousand Characters Text* [The Good Side]¹²²

¹²² http://www.magichanja.com/community/magic_char.html



Characters on the Evil Side		
Great Demon King		Head of the evil side. Does not have a complete body until the magic wall is destroyed in vol. 17. Skillfully uses powerful thousand characters magic, including forbidden magic.
Hon-Seh Demon King		Originally the prince of Heaven, but caught in black magic at a battle against the great demon king, lost memory, and became the great demon king's follower. Starts to regain the lost memory from vol. 12.

Table 6. Characters in *Magic Thousand Characters Text* [The Evil Side]¹²³

Diverse formats of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*

“One Source Multi Use” is a term that is widely used in Korea. The Korea Creative Contents Agency defines One Source Multi Use¹²⁴ (OSMU) as “a business structure that creates added value from making efficient use of one content source by applying it to various fields and genres” (as cited in Hong, E., 2010, p. 32). In her master’s thesis Hong Eun-Hee explains that OSMU creates a competitive cultural product from original content and then widely applies the same content to many different media, thus making competitive products in diverse formats (2010, p. 32). *Magic Thousand Characters Text* is often regarded in Korea as one good example of OSMU in Korea (Han et al., 2004; Joe, 2007). Started as a graphic novel series, *Magic*

¹²³ http://www.magichanja.com/community/magic_char.html?sear_book=magic&sear_position=4

¹²⁴ This concept is very similar to Marsha Kinder’s “trans-media intertextuality” that Kinder mentioned in her book *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games: From Muppet Babies to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1991).

Thousand Characters Text has expanded to various fields including movie, musical, online game, and children's merchandise business. The same content, *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, is presented in diverse formats¹²⁵, as follows:

- Educational Graphic Novels:

The original format; these were main resources for focus group discussions with children. Each volume introduces 20 Chinese characters. Each volume contains approximately 160 pages of text, plus 20 trading cards. (See below for more information on trading cards.)

- Trading Card Game:

Trading cards are provided as complements to the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGNs¹²⁶. Each volume comes with twenty trading cards, thus offering a total of four hundred cards through its 20 volumes. Most children in my focus group interviews said they owned a certain number of the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* trading cards; some insisted they owned hundreds of the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* trading cards. All boys were very knowledgeable about the game's rules¹²⁷, the girls less so.

¹²⁵ For a full description of the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN series and other media formats, visit its official website: <http://www.magichanja.com/>.

¹²⁶ These days, trading cards are also provided as complements to Magic Thousand Characters Text licensed products such as children's vitamins.

¹²⁷ There are various ways to play with the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* trading cards, but the most popular game is the "attack and defense" game, according to my focus group children. On each card is written the power levels for attack and defense. For example, for the Chinese character 天 (*chun*; sky), the attack power level is 7 and the defense power level is also 7. On the other hand, for the Chinese character 花 (*hwa*; flower), the attack power level is 1 and the defense power level is 3. Two people can enjoy the "attack and defense" game. They decide who will go first by playing the rock-paper-scissors game. (Suppose the one who won the rock-paper-scissors game is player A and the one who lost is player B.) A attacks B first by showing one of his cards. Then B shows one of his cards too. If the attack power level of A's card is bigger than the defense power level of B's card, A wins and A can take B's card. For example, if A shows the card 天 (*chun*; sky) and B shows the card 花 (*hwa*; flower), A wins because 天 (*chun*; sky)'s attack power level is 7 and 花 (*hwa*; flower)'s defense power level is 3.



Figure 14. *Magic Thousand Characters Text Trading Cards*¹²⁸

- Digital Book :

A simply digitized version of the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGNs¹²⁹.

- Nintendo DS:

As briefly mentioned earlier, Nintendo DS is a portable game console produced by Nintendo, a Japan-based multinational corporation. Nintendo DS has been one of the most popular game consoles among Korean children since 2004 (Kim, Y., 2011).

According to a survey conducted by E-Mart on April 27, 2011, the biggest retailer corporation in Korea, Nintendo DS was the most wanted Children's Day¹³⁰ gift by children ages under thirteen¹³¹ (Choi, 2011). Most children at my focus group interviews owned their own Nintendo DS and some of them often brought the devices to the interviews.

¹²⁸ <http://blog.naver.com/PostList.nhn?blogId=isa0814>

¹²⁹ See pages 61-62 for more information about *Magic Thousand Characters Text* digital book.

¹³⁰ Korean Children's Day is celebrated on May 5th every year. It is a national holiday. Parents and grandparents give presents to their children on Children's Day.

¹³¹ The Nintendo DS game console price ranges from 150,000 to 450,000 won, which is approximately \$130 to \$400 dollars in the U.S. Thus, the device is affordable for middle class and upper class families, but not for lower class families.

Software for Magic Thousand Characters Text Nintendo DS encourages children to practice writing and memorizing Chinese characters while they play the game. Figure 15 shows an example of how the game is played. In the upper screen Son-O-Gong is fighting against a giant monster. In order to defeat the monster Son-O-Gong decides to make the monster smaller with a thousand character magic, 小 (meaning ‘small’). In order for the game to proceed, the game player, thus, has to write 小 in the lower screen.



Figure 15. An Example of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* Nintendo DS Game Play¹³²

- 3D TV Animation:

The publisher of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN collaborated with GNG Entertainment, an animation production company, to create a 3D version TV animation. It uses the same characters and plots of the original EGN series. It is being broadcast¹³³ through MBC (Munhwa Broadcasting Company), a major broadcasting company in Korea.

¹³² http://www.skonec.com/www_v2/news_data/20090624_0004.jpg

¹³³ Magic Thousand Characters Text 3D Animation's first day of broadcast on MBC was September 5, 2011.



Figure 16. An Image from *Magic Thousand Characters Text* 3D Animation¹³⁴

- Online Video Game (NC Soft):

NC Soft, a Korea-based online video game company, is developing *Magic Thousand Characters Text* MMORPG (Massively multiplayer online role-playing game), which is expected to be released in 2012 (Character Goods, 2011, p. 51).

- Website:

Owlbook, the publisher of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGNs, runs a special website that is dedicated only to *Magic Thousand Characters Text*;

<http://www.magichanja.com/>. It introduces publishing information of the EGN series, provides bulletin boards for children to share their opinions of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* and to form a community of their own. The website also provides information about the Official Hanja (Chinese character) Level Test, guides children to effective study methods, and presents various online games and quizzes that use main and

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<http://blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=okiecookie1&logNo=130099171067&categoryNo=42&viewDate=¤tPage=1&listtype=0>

secondary characters of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*. Many children at my focus group interviews said they often check out this website for updates or to play games.

- Movie:

In August 2010 a movie version of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* was released. Many young audiences went to the theaters to watch this movie (Yoon, 2010). Now it is available on DVD.



Figure 17. A Poster of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* Movie¹³⁵

- Musical:

Musical *Magic Thousand Characters Text* was first staged in February 2008 and has continued to play through August 2011 (Kim, J. M., 2011).

¹³⁵ <http://cf228.uf.daum.net/image/186936054C4E4549912FC4>



Figure 18. A Brochure Image of Musical *Magic Thousand Characters Text*¹³⁶

- Children's Merchandise:

Goods that adopted Magic Thousand Characters Text's characters include children's beverages, vitamins, snacks, clothing, and board games.

Why?: Universe

The success of the *Why?* series

Unlike many current EGNs that were planned and published around the early 2000s, the *Why?* series is based on a previous EGN series, *Whe?*¹³⁷, that was first published in 1989. The *Whe?* series consisted of 10 volumes of science EGNs. Although not a best seller, the *Why?* series was steadily sold for ten years in Korea. The publisher, YeaRimDang, planned on making a more complex EGN series incorporating more science content that was based on the *Whe?* series but was completely different from it. YeaRimdang recreated the contents from scratch, applied trendy comic book writing style, and focused on providing high quality illustrations and

¹³⁶ https://uac.or.kr:55830/upfiles/UACFILES/magic_a1.jpg

¹³⁷ 'Whe' is Romanization of a Korean word '왜'. '왜' means 'Why'. That is, the publisher changed the EGN series title from a Korean word (왜) to an English word (Why), when both titles have the same meaning.

photos (Kim, J., 2009). It took three years to complete the first few volumes of the *Why?* series. From 2003 until 2008 YeaRimDang published a complete series of *Why?* that consists of 50 volumes of science EGNs¹³⁸. Many Korean children's book editors consider this series a useful and accurate collection of scientific knowledge (Choi, H., 2009). Moreover, the series is often regarded as the father of science EGNs in Korea (Park, Kim, & Paik, 2011, p.23).



Figure 19. *Why?: Universe* (left; year 1989)¹³⁹ and *Why?: Universe* (right; year 2009)¹⁴⁰

Science education is an important part of the Korean school curriculum. Many Korean adults recognize the *Why?* series as an excellent EGN that provides authentic scientific information to children. Although not directly related to school curriculum, the *Why?* series provides abundant scientific material that can be useful to children's learning at school; the *Why?*

¹³⁸ The series was complete in December 2008 when vol. 50, *Why?: Science Events*, was released. However, in February 2011, YeaRimDang released the 51st volume, *Why?: Scientific Investigation*. The publisher also released new editions of vol. 1 through vol. 13 (thirteen volumes in total) from 2008 to update new information in the contents.

¹³⁹ <http://www.burimbook.co.kr/file/1203927418RUntitled-1.jpg>

¹⁴⁰ http://www.leadingbook.co.kr/upload/1295498988375_x9788930202305.jpg

series is considered good supplementary reading for elementary school students. Baik Kwang-Gyun, managing editor of YeaRimDang, claims that the *Why?* series is rich in content and substantial enough to be good reads for adults, as well (as cited in Kim, J., 2011). During my interviews with teachers and librarians¹⁴¹ nine out of ten¹⁴² interviewees mentioned that the *Why?* series books are good quality EGNs and that they would recommend the books to children. All six librarians whom I interviewed said they had the *Why?* series in their library collections. YeaRimDang issues a separate catalogue that describes the connections between each volume of the *Why?* series and Korean schools' science curriculum.

Structure and characters of *Why?*

Each volume of *Why?* contains 160 pages. Unlike *Magic Thousand Characters Text* that has extra pages for studying tips and fun activities, *Why?* focuses only on the informational content. Below is the structure of *Why? vol.1: Universe*. The other 50 volumes maintain the same structure as vol.1.

Structure of *Why? Vol.1: Universe*

- Page 1... Half Title
- Page 2... Copyright Page
- Page 3... Editor's Note to Parents and Young Readers
- Pages 4-5... Table of Contents

¹⁴¹ See page 65 for more information about interviews with teachers and librarians.

¹⁴² One of the ten interviewees was not aware of the *Why?* series.

- Page 6... A page with the following sentence written: “Why? If you want to be good at science, try to ask ‘Why?’ about everything around you. Science starts from very small curiosity.”
- Page 7... Introduction of Characters in This Volume
- Pages 8-159... Body of the Content¹⁴³
- Page 160... Advertisement Page that introduces other books in the series

Primary and important secondary characters of the *Why?* series

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Voices of Children – Focus Group with Children: *Selection of Discussion Materials*, the plot of *Why?* involves science journeys on which readers go together with the primary characters. Gom-Ji (boy) and Om-Ji (girl) are names of the two primary characters that appear in every volume of the *Why?* series (See page 49 for details). Interestingly, although the names of the two primary characters are the same in all the volumes, their appearances and personalities differ in every volume. For example, in *Why?: Information Technology* (vol. 36), Gom-Ji is described as an ordinary boy who likes computer games and Om-Ji is described as a nerdy but erudite girl and. However, in *Why?: Electricity and Electrons* (vol. 49), Gom-Ji is introduced as a naïve boy who likes to waste electric energy and Om-Ji is introduced as a cute-looking smart girl (See Figure 20.)

¹⁴³ See page 49 for more information.

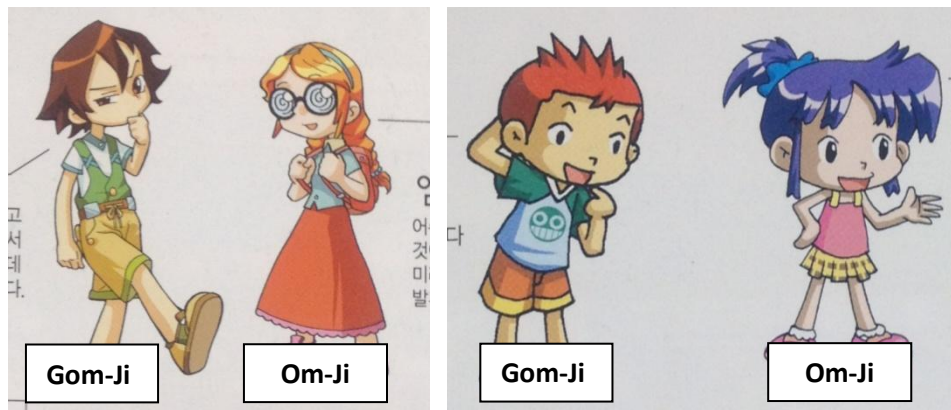


Figure 20. Gom-Ji and Om-Ji in *Why?: Information Technology* (left) and *Why?: Electricity and Electrons* (right)¹⁴⁴

The other characters who accompany Gom-Ji and Om-Ji change in each volume, but the roles are similar. The usual cast includes: 1) an expert on the given subject who is described as a scientist or a science teacher and acts as the leader of the science journey 2) a research assistant to the expert or an alien visitor to earth who is very knowledgeable about the given science subject. In some volumes a research assistant and an alien (or two aliens) appear at the same time. Because there are no enemies or major conflicts between characters in the story, *Why?* is less dynamic nor dramatic than the other two EGNs used in this research. Below is an introduction of the characters that appear in *Why?: Universe*.

¹⁴⁴ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Yearimdang.






Primary Characters		
Om-Ji		Smart and pretty girl. A bit conceited; sometimes acts coy.
Gom-Ji		Om-Ji's friend. Mischievous and funny. Is curious about many things.
Dr. Cheon		Om-Ji's father. PhD in Aerospace engineering. Full of knowledge about the universe.
Agent Hana		Dr. Cheon's cyborg assistant. Beautiful and strong.
Wu-Kae-Bi		An alien from the Andromeda. Knows everything about the universe.

Table 7. Primary Characters in *Why?: Universe*¹⁴⁵

Diverse formats of *Why?*

In a similar way to *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, *Why?* also adopted the concept of OSMU (One Source Multi Use). It expanded to a TV animation, applications and e-books for iPhone, iPad and other tablet PCs. Moreover, a theme park based on the *Why?* series was

¹⁴⁵ The permission to use these images was granted by the copyright holder Yearim dang.

established in order to let children experience some of the scientific facts that were described in the EGNs.

- Educational Graphic Novels:

The original format; these were main resources for focus group discussion with children.

- TV Animation:

In 2009, Exciting Science Animation – a clay animation based on *Why?* EGNs – was released through (Education Broadcasting System), the most reputable education-focused broadcasting company in Korea (Hong, S., 2010). Later the program was made in DVD format and released to the public.



Figure 21. An Image from Exciting Science Animation¹⁴⁶

- Applications and E-books for iPhone, iPad and other Tablet PCs:

The *Why?* Application for iPhone and iPad is basically the same thing as the Exciting Science Animation that was mentioned above. *Why?* E-book is based on *Why?* EGNs.

¹⁴⁶ <http://ebook.gongjulib.go.kr/DRMContent/lib21/why.gif>

Why? Science is an application for tablet PCs; it is also based on *Why?* EGNs but includes deeper and extended science knowledge in order to meet the needs of middle school and high school students (Huh, 2011; Jeong, 2011).

- Theme Park (Why? Park):

Why? Park is a theme park that opened in 2009. Among fifty science subjects that were discussed in the *Why?* EGN series, seven were selected and introduced in more detail at Why? Park – dinosaur, cave, sea, puberty, heredity and blood type, poisonous animals and plants, and invention and discovery. Models – e.g., a dinosaur model – and audio-visual equipment – e.g., 3D theater – are designed to develop children’s interest in science. Why? Park is located in Seoul, the capital of Korea (Hong, S., 2010).

Tomorrow’s King of Experiment

Connection to school curriculum

The scientific knowledge that is introduced in *Tomorrow’s King of Experiment* series directly relates to school curriculum for 3rd to 6th grade¹⁴⁷ science. For example, vol. 1: Competition between Acidity and Base connects to 5th grade science. The publisher presents the connection between each volume’s content and school curriculum in the official website. Under Each volume’s customer review section of the publisher’s official website included some unnamed children’s comments that the book was useful in understanding the given subject, which they could not fully understand at school.

¹⁴⁷ Sometimes it also connects to the science curriculum in middle school.

Structure and characters of *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Each volume of *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* contains approximately 200 pages.

Below is the structure of *Tomorrow's King of Experiment: Competition between Acidity and Base (vol. 1)*. The other 18 volumes maintain the same structure as volume 1.

Structure of *Tomorrow's King of Experiment: Competition between Acidity and Base*

- Page 1... Half Title
- Page 2... Copyright Page
- Page 3... Another Half Title
- Page 4 and 5... Editor's Note to Parents and Young Readers
- Page 6 and 7... Table of Contents
- Page 8 and 9... Introduction of Characters
- Page 10 to 211... Body of the Content

The body of the book is comprised of five chapters. At the end of each chapter, summarized or supplementary scientific information is introduced in one to three pages each; these include a chemical experiment, a story of a famous chemist, and tips on handling experiment tools.

- Page 212 to 216... Advertisement of other Books Published by This Publisher

Primary and important secondary characters of *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Tomorrow's King of Experiment has the most character-driven plot among all three EGNs used in this research. The four primary characters – Bum Woo-Joo, Na Ran-Ee, Kang Won-So, and Ha Ji-Man – are at the center of the story throughout the series. During the course

of experiment competitions with other schools' students the four children learn more about scientific knowledge and become more skillful at science experiments. In addition, by being involved in various relationships with other people and going through conflicts, misunderstandings, and reconciliations the children grow mentally, psychologically and emotionally. As the series develops, readers can see how much the primary characters mature compared to the previous volumes. Thus, *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* can be viewed as a coming-of-age novel as well. Humor and romance – the love triangle of Woo-Joo, Ran-Ee and Won-So – play an important role in story development.

Primary characters	
Bum Woo-Joo	<p>A member of Sae-Byuk elementary school experiment club.</p> <p>Fell in love with Na Ran-Ee (one-sided love).</p> <p>Frivolous in most cases but becomes amazingly smart at important moments.</p>
Na Ran-Ee	<p>A member of Sae-Byuk elementary school experiment club.</p> <p>Admires Kang Won-So; Does not know Bum Woo-Joo's love for her.</p> <p>Has serious passion for experiments.</p>
Kang Won-So	<p>A member of Sae-Byuk elementary school experiment club.</p> <p>Smart, good-looking, athletic and popular.</p> <p>Blunt and sometimes looks down on others.</p>
Ha Ji-Man	<p>A member of Sae-Byuk elementary school experiment club.</p> <p>Bum Woo-Joo's best friend.</p> <p>Always brings a notebook; takes notes on all newly acquired information.</p>

Table 8. Primary Characters in *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Important Secondary characters	
Kah-Seol	Sae-Byuk elementary school experiment club's teacher. Known as an eccentric in the science field. Usually kind but very strict in terms of experiment.
Principal of Sae-Byuk Elementary School	Establishes the experiment club in the hope of increasing the exam scores of Sae-Byuk elementary school. Rival/friend of the principal of Tae-Yang elementary school
Principal of Tae-Yang Elementary School	Attempts to abolish Sae-Byuk elementary school experiment club. Ignores Sae-Byuk elementary school on the outside, but feels anxious about its existence on the inside.
Huh-Hong	A member of Tae-Yang elementary school experiment club. Rival of Kang Won-So from childhood. Snobbish and wicked but very competent at experiments.

Table 9. Important Secondary Characters in *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Diverse formats of *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

- Educational Graphic Novels:

The original format; these were main resources for focus group discussions with children.

- Application for iPad:

In January 2011, *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* e-book was released as an application for iPad¹⁴⁸. Currently¹⁴⁹ vol. 1 and vol. 2 are available to be purchased and viewed. *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* e-book for iPad is not simply a converted PDF file from the hard copy book. It allows readers to simulate science experiments by touching the screen. See Figure 22 for an example. In this screen, the book says, "Step 3: Put the magnet into the beaker that is full of mixed components and stir several times." A child who reads this e-book on the iPad can touch

¹⁴⁸ iPad is a tablet computer designed, developed and marketed by Apple Inc.

¹⁴⁹ Checked in December 26, 2011.

the magnet from the blackboard using her/his finger, drag it into the beaker, and rub the screen several times. Then the iron powder from the mixture will be attached to the magnet, which is one of the experiment procedures to separate each component from the mixture. These are all done on the iPad screen; children are virtually able to practice experimentation just by touching the screen (Baek, 2011; Park, 2011).



Figure 22. A Screen Image from *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* e-book for the iPad¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ <http://cfiler29.uf.tistory.com/image/1871C94C4D69EF14306223>

Findings

I started this study with three research questions: (1) Are EGNs really educational and entertaining at the same time?; (2) Is EGN reading regarded as “real” reading?; (3) Can we evaluate children’s reading of EGNs using standards for traditional literacy? This section will answer these questions based on the findings from the in-depth focus group interviews with children, observations on children’s reading behaviors at a public school and a public library, interviews with teachers and librarians, and content analysis on selected EGNs.

Education and Entertainment in EGNs

Children in my focus groups acknowledged that EGNs are made up of two different parts – the fun part and the educational part. Unlike some adults’ expectations that children will naturally learn information while reading EGNs, most children easily picked out and enjoyed only the fun parts of an EGN, while ignoring the information parts. For most children, humor was the primary source of their enthusiasm for EGNs. The girls responded to the subject of romance more than the boys, and the boys responded to violent illustrations in EGNs more than girls did. However, their passion for EGNs was almost the same.

Who reads EGNs?

Korean children read EGNs extensively. Ms. Choi noted that 90% of the children who visit her school library choose EGNs to read in the library. All teachers and school librarians that I interviewed said they observed their students reading EGNs at school – some even during the class hours. In my focus group interviews, all fourteen children were very familiar with EGNs. All of them had read one or more volumes of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* and *Why?* before

the focus group discussions. Eight children had read *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* prior to the focus group discussions, three had heard about it and three were new to it – this may be because the *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* series was the most recently published one among the three EGN series¹⁵¹. Jae-Hee, Yoo-Bin and Dong-Hoon often brought other EGNs to the focus group interviews; they either brought their own EGNs from home or borrowed several copies on the way to the focus group interviews. Jae-Hee and Yoo-Bin read those EGNs whenever they felt the discussions got boring. Mrs. Han, who is a mother of a six-year-old boy, said her son reads EGNs whenever he has any spare time – e.g., right after coming home, before doing school assignments, and so on. From my observations at Timber Public Library, the Crayon School library and Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom at Crayon Elementary School, I could verify the popularity of EGNs.

I visited Timber Public Library in an unobtrusive location three times and observed what books children read or checked out. During my visits, almost all children who read in the library read EGNs or general comic books; the majority were EGNs¹⁵². Only toddlers or young children – probably kindergartners or first graders – who sat next to their parents read books that were not EGNs or general comic books. People constantly came in and out of the library, but on average there were about forty children and twenty adults in the library at the same time, plus members of the library staff. Children read EGNs in various locations: on couches, between bookshelves – standing, leaning against the bookshelf, or sitting on the floor – or at a window sill. The EGNs were shelved with other type of books according to the Korean Decimal Classification¹⁵³ system,

¹⁵¹ The first volume of the *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* series was published in 2006, while the first volume of the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* series was published in 2003 and the first volume of the *Why?* series was published in 2001.

¹⁵² See page 16 for the distinction between general comic books and EGNs.

¹⁵³ Korean Decimal Classification (KDC) is a library classification system that is widely used in Korean public libraries and school libraries. It is similar but not identical to Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC).

which can be complex for young children. However, many children seemed to know well where their favorite EGNs were located. Sometimes a group of middle school students came in to the children's section and wandered around bookshelves¹⁵⁴. They picked out some EGNs, shared some jokes about them – e.g., “Isn’t this awesome?”, “I read the whole series like three times” – and left the library.

Toddlers and young children who were with their parents read picture books alone or with their mothers. One father sitting next to his child played with his iPad. Some mothers read childcare magazines. Generally, older children – second graders or older – who visited the library with their parents did not stay long. They returned their books, checked out new books and then left. Most children who read EGNs were those who visited the library with their friends or siblings. When the parents came to pick up their children, those children were persuaded to stop reading the EGNs and check out regular children's books¹⁵⁵ instead. The difference between children's in-library use and books they borrowed will be discussed further in a later part of this chapter.

On the first day of my observation at Crayon Elementary School, I arrived earlier than the students; the first class started at 9 a.m. and I arrived at the school at 8 a.m. On the locker at the back of Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom were two volumes of EGNs. They were *Magic Thousand Characters Text* vol. 7 and *Math Devil*¹⁵⁶ vol. 4. A bookmark was inside *Math Devil*, indicating the last page the previous reader read to. At 8:20 a.m. two girls arrived¹⁵⁷. As soon as

¹⁵⁴ There was no young adult library in Timber Public Library.

¹⁵⁵ In this research, I refer to “regular children's books” as children's books that are not comic books or EGNs. Therefore, in this research I include children's novels, children's non-fiction books, and children's picture books in the “regular children's books” category.

¹⁵⁶ *Math Devil* is a math EGN series published by Woongjin.

¹⁵⁷ Most students walk to school in Korea. Students are required to arrive at school by 8:50 a.m. in this particular school. Usually, the earliest time students come to school is 8:20a.m. As the first class starts at 9:00 a.m., the students have 10 minutes to 40 minutes of free time in the morning, depending on when they arrive at school.

they put down their backpacks they went to the locker, picked up one EGN for each out of the two EGNs that were on the locker, and began to read those.

Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom was near the school library¹⁵⁸. Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom for my research, the two other classrooms and the school Library shared one hallway. Many students of these three classrooms visited the school library many times a day. Once they arrived at their classrooms they put down their backpacks at the seats and went to the library. Some students even waited at the library door until the school librarian came and opened the door at around 8:30 a.m. Generally boys showed two different behavior patterns in the morning. The usual behavior pattern of the first group of boys was: (a) to come to the classroom, (b) to put down their backpacks at their seats, (c) to visit the library, (d) to see if their friends were there, (e) to mingle with friends in the library, chatting over one non-fiction book or an EGN or a general comic book (usually four to five boys gathered for one book), (f) to go out of the library when the librarian scolded them for being noisy, (g) to run around in the hallway, (h) and to repeat coming in and out of the library until the class started at 9 a.m. The second group of boys' usual behavior pattern in the morning was: (a) to come to the classroom, (b) to put down their backpacks at their seats, (c) to visit the library, (d) to pick an EGN or a general comic book or a illustrated non-fiction book¹⁵⁹, and read it by themselves until the bell rang for the class to start or the teacher to come in to the library to take them back to the classroom. Girls showed more diverse behavior patterns than boys in the morning. Some girls went to the library and read just like the second group of boys. The other girls remained in the classroom – some mingled and chatted, some read books alone, some read books with a friend, some played simple games such

¹⁵⁸ In Crayon Elementary School, the school library and Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom were located very close to each other was not known to me prior to my actual visit to the locations. However, as these two rooms were close, I was often able to observe both locations at the same time unobtrusively.

¹⁵⁹ These illustrated non-fiction books were mostly about insects, reptiles and cars.

as *gonggi*¹⁶⁰, and others prepared for the class: whatever they did they were all fairly quiet.

Unlike boys, most girls were seated and ready for the class about 5 minutes before the first class started. Every morning before class began the school library was crowded and noisy, while Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom was relaxed and quiet. Lunchtime was an hour. After they finished eating, students enjoyed the break. Students' activities during lunch break were similar to their activities in the morning, except that many boys went out to the playground to play soccer or other sports¹⁶¹.

Table 10 presents what I observed at Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom at Crayon Elementary School in terms of students and their reading. I recorded the number of students who did reading and the type of books they read. For example, "1st Day / 8:30 a.m. / EGN (2)" means two students read EGNs in Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom around 8:30 a.m. on the first day of my observation. Note that I have only recorded students who were reading books including regular children's books and EGNs.

¹⁶⁰ *Gonggi* is a popular Korean traditional game that is played using five small grape-sized pebbles.

¹⁶¹ Most boys went out to the playground and the other boys went to the school library to read. About half of the girls remained in the classroom and the other half of the girls went to the school library to read. Unlike in the U.S., girls usually do not participate in group sports like soccer in Korea. Thus, the playground is usually occupied by boys during lunch time.

	1st Day	2nd Day	3rd Day¹⁶²
8:30 a.m.	EGN (2) General comic book (1)	EGN (2)	EGN (1)
8:40 a.m.	EGN (4) General comic book (1)	EGN (4) Textbook (1)	EGN (2)
8:50 a.m.	EGN (9) Novel (1)	EGN (1) Textbook (1)	Picture book (2; reading together)
12:40 p.m.	EGN (2) Novel (1)	EGN (2) Novel (2)	No one read
12: 50 p.m.	Novel (2)	Novel (2)	No one read

Table 10. Children's Reading Patterns at Mrs. Lee's Fourth Grade Classroom

There was only one school librarian and no aide or assistant at Crayon Elementary School. Student volunteers and parent volunteers helped her in the morning, during lunch hour, and after school. The volunteers worked at the circulation desk. They also shelved books when they had spare time. The library was always crowded in the morning, during recess¹⁶³, during lunch hours and after school. As many children came to the library just to mingle with friends, the librarian had to make the rounds every five minutes to calm down the too noisy and active children. At all times, more than half of the children who read in the library were reading EGNs; science and history were the most frequently observed themes. Considering the EGN collection was only 5% of the total library collection in the school Library, children's concentration on EGNs is worth

¹⁶² The third day of my observation was a rainy day. Children were extremely active and the classroom was very crowded because the boys could not go out and play.

¹⁶³ In all Korean public and private schools, students are given ten minutes break between each class. For example, after the math class is finished and before the history class starts, students can rest for ten minutes. During this recess, children can go to the bathroom, chat or play with friends in the classroom or in the hallway, or briefly visit the school library.

noticing. Some children used the biography EGN series – *Who?*¹⁶⁴ – as references when doing school assignments. The school librarian told me the *Who?* series has become one of the most popular EGN series recently. She said children like to read or check out the *Who?* series as much as the *Why?* series. I could also observe some children reading a particular children's magazine, *Children's Science Dong-A*. My initial assumption was that those children really liked science, as the magazine was full of thorough scientific information. However, later the school librarian told me the real reason: children read the magazine because of the serial comic strips in it. Children were more interested in reading the comic strips than scientific knowledge in the magazine.

In the school library of Crayon Elementary School, I could not discern every single type of book students were reading every ten minutes, because the room was too crowded and I needed to remain an unobtrusive observer. Therefore, I just checked the type of books children were reading three times a day – once in the morning, once during lunch break, and once after school.

¹⁶⁴ *Who?* is a biography EGN series that has been published by Dasan Eorinee since 2010. Many of the world's great people are introduced in comics format.

	1 st Day	2 nd Day	3 rd Day
Morning	EGN (19) Non-fiction (5) Novel (1) Picture book (1) Children's magazine (3)	EGN (15) Non-fiction (8) Novel (2) Children's magazine (3)	EGN (22) General comic book (2) Non-fiction (7) Novel (1) Picture book (3) Children's magazine (4)
Lunch break	EGN (18) Non-fiction (2) Novel (1) Picture book (3) Children's magazine (4)	EGN (22) General comic books (3) Non-fiction (5) Children's magazine (1)	EGN (11) General comic book (4) Novel (2) Picture book (2) Children's magazine (2)
After school	EGN (10) Novel (1) Picture book (2)	* no observation ¹⁶⁵	EGN (5) General comic book (2; reading together) Novel (2; reading together)

Table 11. Children's Reading at the School Library of Crayon Elementary School¹⁶⁶

Table 10 and Table 11 imply that EGNs are the most popular reading materials for children at school library at Crayon Elementary School. However, despite EGNs' popularity, quite a few children read other types of books – this will be discussed in a later part of this chapter.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Voices of Adults – Interviews with Teachers and Librarians: *Unexpected Data Collected*, one of the teachers that I interviewed – Mrs. Lee – conducted a simple survey of her students' pleasure reading. According to her survey, twenty-one among

¹⁶⁵ On the second day of my observation at the school library of Crayon Elementary School, I was unable to observe the school library after school.

¹⁶⁶ Librarian B said that the children's reading behaviors in the school library on the three days I attended there were typical of their activities.

thirty-two students answered that they preferred reading EGNs to regular children's books; eleven students answered that they preferred reading regular children's books to EGNs. The fact that these eleven students preferred regular children's books to EGNs does not necessarily mean they read only regular children's books. Even the child who responded, "There are too many pictures in EGNs, so they make you stupid, but regular children's books make you smart and you get to have more imaginative power when you read regular children's books," to Mrs. Lee's survey noted she/he¹⁶⁷ read three EGNs per week on average; for comparison, she/he noted that she/he read three or more regular children's books per week. Ms. Yoon said that in her classroom, smart students who excel at school read EGNs when they want to relax (personal communication, August 24, 2010). Mrs. Lee noted she observed the "clever" kids reading EGNs many times in her classroom. She said students who excel at school tend to read anything and everything; she thought that students who have diverse reading experience – both direct and indirect – are good at studying and obtain good grades on school tests (personal communication, August 19, 2010).

Children's EGN reading patterns and learning effect

Whether or not children actually learn from reading EGNs may be one of the biggest concerns for most parents who purchase or allow EGNs for their children. Many EGN publishers advertise the effectiveness of EGNs in children's learning – they emphasize that EGNs are an easier way to obtain useful information than regular children's books and that EGNs stimulate children's curiosity about various subject areas. Even parents or teachers who are not favorable to the comics genre tend to believe that children will learn at least something from reading EGNs (Park, C., 2006, pp. 40-41). The focus group discussions with children indicated that reading

¹⁶⁷ The gender of this student is not known because it was an anonymous survey.

EGNs do not have much impact on children's information learning: the children demonstrated that their purpose of reading EGNs is to have fun, not to learn information.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the focus group children discussed their opinions on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base* at the last session – week 4. In addition to regular discussions, I created a set of quizzes based on the content of *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base* and asked children the questions. I chose this particular EGN for the quizzes because it was the most recently published book among the three selected EGNs and many children were not likely to have read it before the focus group interviews¹⁶⁸. The quizzes consisted of eight questions on scientific information and nine questions on the other details, including trivial facts about the characters, puns and humor. Through this activity I wanted to get a glimpse of the kind of information the children obtained from reading EGNs. The strictest way to do this may be to distribute test papers to children and make them fill those out. However, taking an examination was counter to my purpose of conducting focus group interviews, which aimed to let children freely speak with their own voices in a safe and natural environment. I did not want to put additional stress on children when they were already stressed out from too much learning, which originates from education fever in Korea. In fact, even though I tried to make the quizzes sound as trifling and fun as I could, all children responded nervously to them at first. Especially the girls at Group III reacted with concern:

Me: Let's try a little quiz today.

Children: (all with very astounded faces; screaming) Whaaaaat????

Me: Surprise! It's just a very simple and trivial quiz competition.

¹⁶⁸ When I asked the focus group children whether or not they had read *Tomorrow's King of Experiment Vol. 1*, only eight children said they had read it prior to the focus group discussions. Three had heard about it and it was new to three.

Joo-Hee: Why are we taking so many tests?

Me: Uhm, I think this is our first.

Min-Suh: I had three tests today. A reading comprehension, and then a spelling test, and then...

Yoo-Jin: (interrupting Min-Suh) Hey! We had a spelling test, too!

Min-Suh: And then math. Spelling test, math, and then, reading comprehension.

Yoo-Jin: You didn't take the tribe's test¹⁶⁹ though!

(Group III, Week 4)

Only after I explained that our quizzes were not intended to evaluate children's learning ability and that it was just to have fun together because the quizzes included very silly questions, did the children relax.

I told them this was an entertaining quiz competition and the one who answered the most questions would get a prize¹⁷⁰. I did it this way in order to encourage children to actively engage in this exercise. If I just asked seventeen questions in a row and requested children to raise their hands if they knew the answer and I counted the number of hands, the children would have been easily bored. By adopting this "fun competition" strategy, I could see children enthusiastically participate in the quizzes. In all groups the children yelled out loud to answer the questions. My assistant and I frequently had to quiet them. In addition, we made a rule that a student had to speak out her/his name and raise a hand if she/he knew the answer, but not before I finished my sentence. Although I could not count the exact number of children who knew the answer for each

¹⁶⁹ The tribe's test is a test that asks knowledge of Native Americans; Yoo-Jin had taken this test at her school this day.

¹⁷⁰ At the end of the quiz competition I gave everyone the same gift (handmade candy necklace) and all were satisfied.

question, I could see roughly which questions were easy to answer and which were not; I will explain later how I could distinguish the difference.

Below are the questions and answers to the seventeen questions:

Question #1 (Q1). What is the name of the Sae-Byuk elementary school experiment club's teacher?

Answer #1 (A2). Kah-Seol.

Q2. Bum Woo-Joo works as a messenger among his friends by delivering bags or other personal items. How much money do his friends pay him per each delivery?

A2. 300 won¹⁷¹.

Q3. The principal of Sae-Byuk elementary school was mad because the school was ranked ____ among 512 schools in the state in terms of students' academic achievement. What is the number in the blank?

A3. 509.

Q4. Na Ran-Ee tried to give a love letter to Kang Won-So, but by accident she gave him an advertising flyer. What was written on the flyer?

A5. Mazzang Pizza.

Q5. Let's say you have a brush dipped in apple juice. You want to draw a picture on paper with that brush. The image is obscure when you drew it on the paper, but when you bring the paper

¹⁷¹ Won is Korean currency.

close to a candle, it will show you the image vividly as it gets dry. This is because of an element that is in the apple. What is that element?

A5. Citric acid.

Q6. Kang Won-So is a rival of Huh-Hong's in the neighbor school. Kang Won-So compares himself to a dragon and Huh-Hong as a particular animal. What is this animal?

A6. Baby tiger.

Q7. In the nineteenth century, the wine industry in France suffered a great loss because wine turned sour too easily. One scientist invented a method to destroy all pathogenic micro-organisms that spoil wine, while keeping the taste and other pathogens alive. What is the name of this scientist?

A7. (Louis) Pasteur.

Q8. Kang Won-So asked Bum Woo-Joo to classify six different liquids into acid and base. In order to solve this task Bum Woo-Joo used two different methods – one was using litmus papers. What was the second thing he used?

A8. Marble.

Q9. Kah-Seol asked Bum Woo-Joo to organize all chemical bottles in the laboratory. When Bum Woo-Joo said Kang Won-So was better qualified for this job, Kah-Seol said, "I know. However, Won-So has a fatal weakness." What was Won-So's fatal weakness?

A9. That he was always too busy.

Q10. Name this law: At constant pressure, the volume of a gas increases by $\frac{1}{273}$ of the volume of a gas when the temperature reaches absolute zero.

A10. Charles's Law

Q11. Grape-skin juice can be used as an indicator to distinguish acid and base. When we put this indicator in acid liquid the color of the juice turns _____. To which color does it turn?

A11. Red.

Q12. Where was the experiment competition between Sae-Byuk elementary school and Tae-Yang elementary school held?

A12. Tae-Yang elementary school.

Q13. Kah-Seol told himself, "This student reminds me of my childhood – the look and everything." What was this student's name?

A13. Kang Won-So.

Q14. Naphthalene is insoluble in water but is soluble in ____ or _____. Name these two chemicals.

A14. Acetone & Ethanol.

Q15. There was a fire during the experiment competition between Sae-Byuk elementary school and Tae-Yang elementary school. The experiment club's teacher at Tae-Yang elementary school

rapidly picked up a fire extinguisher to put out the fire, but happened to shoot it all over on someone. Who was this person?

A15. The principal of Tae-Yang elementary school.

Q16. One of the methods to distinguish acid and base is to use litmus papers. Between acid and base, one changes blue litmus paper to red, and the other changes red litmus paper to blue. What changes blue litmus paper to red and what changes red litmus paper to blue?

A16. Acid changes a blue litmus paper to red and base changes red litmus paper to blue.

Q17. PH is a measurement of the level of acid or base in a solution or a substance. What is the PH value of water?

A17. 7.

- Questions about scientific information: Q5, Q7, Q8, Q10, Q11, Q14, Q16, Q17

- Questions about story, characters and humor: Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q6, Q9, Q12, Q13, Q15

As what we did was a quiz competition rather than a formal test, it was not possible to know exactly who knew the answer and who did not. However, children's reactions to my questions or their behaviors after someone answered correctly made it possible for me to estimate who knew the answer and who did not. If a question was easy, all the children raised their hands even before I finished my sentence. Sometimes they spoke the answers instead of their names¹⁷² because they were so excited. In many cases children argued about who had raised a hand first and blamed others for violating rules. Sometimes children guessed exactly what the

¹⁷² The rule was to speak one's name first and answer the question only after I allowed him/her to answer.

question would be and spoke the answer in advance. In cases like these, I regarded all or most children as knowing the answer. When a question was difficult, silence ruled for a second. Children made stunned faces or gazed at each other in blank dismay. Some children whined at me for making such a difficult question; one girl even looked like crying once¹⁷³. When the question was difficult, children liked to throw out any wrong answers. For example, in group I, for Q7 (naming a nineteenth century scientist who invented a method to destroy all pathogenic micro-organisms that spoil wine, while keeping the taste and other pathogens good) children said various scientists' names they knew, including Fabre, Alexander Fleming, Dr. mouse, Newton, and 'some' doctor. It took about 5 minutes until Yoon-Ho finally gave the correct answer, Pasteur. In cases like this, I considered the question was difficult for most children.

When a question was neither too easy nor too difficult, one or two children in each group answered it correctly. In these cases I could estimate whether or not the other children knew the answer by their comments. Children tended to say "Ugh, I did not know that!", "How did you know such a difficult one?", or "I thought the answer was xxx (wrong answer)."

Table 12 indicates what questions children could answer or not. I grouped the questions into two categories – scientific information and story information on characters or plots.

¹⁷³ This girl was a very smart child. She may have been mad because not knowing the answer hurt her pride.

	Question Number	Answer	Who Knew the Answer			Estimated Number of Children Who Knew the Answer
			Group I ¹⁷⁴	Group II ¹⁷⁵	Group III	
Scientific Information	Q5	Citric acid	Nobody	Nobody	Nobody	0 / 12
	Q7	Pasteur	Yoon-Ho ¹⁷⁶	Soo-Min	Nobody	2 / 12
	Q8	Marble	Joo-Young, Dong-Hoon, Jae-Hee	Soo-Min (Sung-Min said 'rock powder')	Yoo-Jin	5 / 12
	Q10	Charles's Law	Dong-Hoon	Sung-Min	Yoo-Jin, Joo-Hee	4 / 12
	Q11	Red	Dong-Hoon	Soo-Min	Jee-Won ¹⁷⁷	3 / 12
	Q14	Acetone & Ethanol	Jae-Hee	Ha-Yoon	Yoo-Jin ¹⁷⁸	3 / 12
	Q16	Acid changes a blue litmus paper to red and base changes red litmus paper to blue	Dong-Hoon, Joo-Young	Nobody	Min-Suh	3 / 12

Table 12. Results of the Quiz Competition Based on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment: Competition between Acidity and Base*

¹⁷⁴ Yoo-Bin gave up the competition at the beginning of the quizzes. Instead, she participated as my assistant. Thus she was not counted in the total number of children in this table.

¹⁷⁵ Hee-Joon could not attend the Week 4 group discussion because he was ill. He was not counted in the total number of children in this table.

¹⁷⁶ Took long time to hit the right answer. Yoon-Ho could reach the right answer after many wrong answers.

¹⁷⁷ Hit the right answer by accident after many wrong answers, including yellow, pink, light purple, and deep purple.

¹⁷⁸ Took long time to hit the right answer. The wrong answers include vinegar, salted water, Atesone, Atesan, natrium, Aceron, and Acerom; Joo-Hee said she did not even know what naphthalene was. (Naphthalene was an element mentioned in the question.)

Table 12 (cont.)

	Question Number	Answer	Who Knew the Answer			Estimated Number of Children Who Knew the Answer
			Group I ¹⁷⁹	Group II ¹⁸⁰	Group III	
Scientific Information	Q17	PH 7	Jae-Hee, Joo-Young	Joon-Ha ¹⁸¹	Joo-Hee ¹⁸²	4 / 12
Story Information	Q1	Kah-Seol	All	Soo-Min (Ha-Yoon said 'Kee-Seol')	All	9 / 12
	Q2	300 won	All	All	Jee-Won, Joo-Hee, Yoo-Jin	11 / 12
	Q3	509	All	All	Jee-Won, Yoo-Jin, Min-Suh	11 / 12
	Q4	Mazzang Pizza	All	All	All	12 / 12
	Q6	Baby tiger	All	Sung-Min	All	11 / 12
	Q9	That Won-So is always too busy	All	Ha-Yoon	All	11 / 12

¹⁷⁹ Yoo-Bin gave up the competition at the beginning of the quizzes. Instead, she participated as my assistant. Thus she was not counted in the total number of children in this table.

¹⁸⁰ Hee-Joon could not attend the Week 4 group discussion because he was ill. He was not counted in the total number of children in this table.

¹⁸¹ Hit the right answer after many wrong answers, including PH 40, 22, 45, 55, 20, 222, 220, 210, and 0.

¹⁸² Hit the right answer after many wrong answers, including PH 25, 100, 13, and 10.

Table 12 (cont.)

	Question Number	Answer	Who Knew the Answer			Estimated Number of Children Who Knew the Answer
			Group I ¹⁸³	Group II ¹⁸⁴	Group III	
Story Information	Q12	Tae-Yang elementary school	All	Sung-Min, Ha-Yoon, Soo-Min	All	11 / 12
	Q13	Kang Won-So	All	Sung-Min	All	11 / 12
	Q15	The principal of Tae-Yang elementary school	All	Sung-Min, Ha-Yoon	Min-Suh, Yoo-Jin	8 / 12

According to Table 12, we could see children were better at answering story questions than answering questions about scientific information. In other words, children remembered the details of humor, characters and plots better than scientific information in the book. Therefore, it would be safe to say that most children did more aesthetic reading than efferent reading when reading this particular EGN. That is, *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* reading by my focus group children was located more on the aesthetic side of Rosenblatt's efferent/aesthetic continuum. One might argue that this is only a unique case of this particular group and this particular EGN. The fact that *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base* is based

¹⁸³ Yoo-Bin gave up the competition at the beginning of the quizzes. Instead, she participated as my assistant. Thus she was not counted in the total number of children in this table.

¹⁸⁴ Hee-Joon could not attend the Week 4 group discussion because he was ill. He was not counted in the total number of children in this table.

on fifth grade science¹⁸⁵¹⁸⁶ may be one reason for children's low response rate on questions about scientific information. However, the fifth graders and sixth graders – Yoon-Ho, Dong-Hoon, Joo-Young and Soo-Min – did not always give correct answers to questions about scientific information, although they were more successful than the other children¹⁸⁷. Moreover, children's comments from the focus group discussions support my assumption that generally children's EGN reading is located closer to the aesthetic side of the efferent/aesthetic continuum. Girls in Group III (same-sex group) emphasized that most boys do not read the educational contents of EGNs:

Yoo-Jin: When you take a look at *Why?*, there are tiny little letters that organize
[educational contents] in great detail, between pages,

Min-Suh & Joo-Hee: [interrupting Yoo-Jin's comment] They (boys) do not read them.

Yoo-Jin: That's right. And talking about the *Why?* book, well, boys *do* want to read it at first. But when it gets more and more to the study part and gets boring and when there is a less funny part, then they don't read it. They don't read it even if somebody would buy it for them.

Me: Even when someone buys the book for him?

Yoo-Jin: Yes. And the *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, too. They (boys) don't read the learning part.

Joo-Hee: They just do the trading card games with it. Well, it's originally for learning while having fun.

¹⁸⁵ According to the publisher, i-Seum, *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base* is based on fifth grade science of Korean elementary school curriculum, but is also readable for all elementary school students (<http://www.i-seum.com>, retrieved February 8, 2012).

¹⁸⁶ The focus group children were grades two to six.

¹⁸⁷ Among eight questions about scientific information, Yoon-Ho gave two correct answers, Joo-Young and Soo-Min gave three correct answers for each, and Dong-Hoon gave four correct answers.

Yoo-Jin: Yes. It's just like the Yu-Gi-Oh¹⁸⁸.

(Group III, Week 1)

As we can see from Joo-Hee's comment, "it's originally for learning while having fun," the girls were aware of the original purpose of Educational Graphic Novels: giving information to readers while engaging them in a pleasurable experience. The girls' comments indicate that children know that EGNs are made up of two different parts – the fun part and the educational part. Their comments also indicate that it is easy for children to pick out and enjoy only the fun parts of an EGN, while ignoring the information parts.

I showed children a TV news video that contains an interview with a third grader boy about *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN (Cho & Kim, 2008). The boy in the interview said, "As the book is in comics [format], I can study Chinese characters better. It's interesting and fun, which makes me buy the series again and again." As soon as the interview ended, the girls all exclaimed "No!" and started chatting out loud¹⁸⁹:

Joo-Hee: No, no. It's just because he's on TV.

Me: Do you think he said that way only because he was on TV?

Joo-Hee: Definitely. Boys usually skip pages like this [imitating boys' EGN reading manner; turning over pages fast].

Yoo-Jin: Well, the news videotaping people and the talking people (anchors) all don't

¹⁸⁸ Japanese manga series. The *Yu-Gi-Oh* trading card game is popular among boys.

¹⁸⁹ Only the girls in Group III reacted to this video clip. Children in the other two groups were just awestruck by a stack of EGNs that were shown as a background.

know at all. They cannot just do it [come to a conclusion that EGNs are a good study aid] with only that one boy. As I see, he looks smart, but let them [the news people] meet the other boys at least once.

Min-Suh: You just can think the opposite¹⁹⁰.

(Group III, Week 1)

Interestingly, as the discussion progressed, these girls directly or indirectly revealed that they have the same EGN reading patterns as what they have described as the boys' EGN reading patterns. At the quiz competition on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*, whenever I asked questions about scientific information Joo-Hee complained that I asked a question about what she hadn't read; she said, "We don't read such things" (Group III, Week 4). Min-Suh also admitted she usually does not read the educational part when she reads EGNs. Min-Suh said, "Most children read EGNs because of the comics, not because of education. In my case, I have Korean history EGNs at home, but mostly I skip all the important parts [educational parts]. The rest [entertaining part] is so much fun" (Group III, Week 1).

Min-Suh's comment about her EGN reading pattern puzzled me at first because she was a very smart child who was the top student at the most prestigious private school in Korea. However, my doubt was resolved soon. It turned out that she skipped the educational part not because she did not like to learn new information, but because her purpose for reading EGNs was to have fun. Min-Suh's EGN reading was located at the extreme end of aesthetic reading. Min-Suh said, "This kind of comics [meaning EGNs] are just to let kids have fun and laugh. So we just look at the fun part" (Group III, Week 2). Ha-Yoon said that *Tomorrow's King of*

¹⁹⁰ The boy at the TV news video said, "As the book is in comics [format], I can study Chinese characters better." Min-Suh meant that the reality is different from what the boy said: in real life, boys do not study Chinese characters from reading the EGNs even if they are in comics format.

Experiment seems no different from a general comic book. She said, “This book, you know, doesn’t sound like a science book. It never does. It’s just a comic book” (Group II, Week 4). As we can see from table 12, *Tomorrow’s King of Experiment* apparently contains quite complex scientific information. Thus, it is possible that Ha-Yoon naturally ignored the educational part while doing aesthetic reading, just as Min-Suh did. Mrs. Han, whose son was six years old when I interviewed her, noted that she purchased the *Why?* series for her son when he was five years old; she said many Korean parents buy the *Why?* series for their children when the children become about five years old. Mrs. Han said her son enjoyed reading the *Why?* series during kindergarten year – when he was five. She wondered at first how he could enjoy the books because she knew there were very complex concepts and difficult information for a five year old boy. Later she assumed her son just skipped the educational part and focused only on interesting episodes (personal communication, August 17, 2010). Yoo-Jin insisted that history is learned more effectively when reading in “a thick book with tiny little letters in it” than reading in a comic book format. She said learning history from a regular history book is much more fun. (Group III, Week 1).

In *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, there are special sections prepared for Chinese characters writing practice¹⁹¹. When I asked children whether or not they practiced these pages, most children said they did not. Dong-Hoon, Min-Suh and Jee-Won said they did not do the practice because it was not fun¹⁹². Joo-Hee said she did not even know that those pages existed. Min-Suh said that when she watched the digital book version of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, she took a break on her own when the practice session was on. Joo-Young said he hated these practices. Jae-Hee said he did not practice writing with this book because he already knew

¹⁹¹ See page 89 for more information.

¹⁹² It seemed that these children found this writing practice not enjoyable because they did it before in school or at private tutoring.

all those characters from previous learning experiences other than this book. The rest of the children simply said they did not care. Yoo-Jin was the only one who did the writing practice with this book.

As seen in Jae-Hee's case, learning Chinese characters from private tutoring or at school at the principal's discretion is quite popular these days in Korea. All of the focus group children also mentioned their Chinese character learning experiences. Hee-Joon said he had a private tutor who came to his house regularly to teach him Chinese characters. Sung-Min said his preschool teacher taught him Chinese characters when he was 4 years old. Soo-Min's homeroom teacher at second grade emphasized the importance of Chinese characters learning; Soo-Min said they frequently had quizzes about Chinese characters in the class. Dong-Hoon said he had been teaching himself Chinese characters with a separate textbook for years. Given the fact that many children in my focus groups were already familiar with the twenty Chinese characters that were introduced in *Magic Thousand Characters Text vol.1: Blow Baram Pung*, it is understandable that Joo-Young, Dong-Hoon, and Yoon-Ho said they "did not learn anything from reading EGNs" (Group I, Week 2).

Min-Suh indicated that the amount of educational information in some EGNs is insufficient. She mentioned that she once observed a math EGN that introduced only the 2 times table in the first volume. She was enraged and said "They should have added at least the 3 times table to it!" (Group III, Week 1). Min-Suh's anger echoes many adults' worries about EGNs. During the recruiting process for the focus group interviews with children, many parents asked me, "Are EGNs like *Magic Thousand Characters Text* really helpful in learning when there are only twenty Chinese characters introduced in one volume?" Hong Jae-Chul, a comics publication planner, also admits that twenty is a small number of Chinese characters to be contained in one

volume, compared to earlier EGNs¹⁹³. According to Hong, as the emphasis of EGNs in the children's comics market has moved from education to entertainment, the portion of educational elements is getting reduced from many EGNs (Han et al., 2008, p. 30).

Despite those claims about EGNs' insufficient educational information that are described above, some children in my focus groups admitted that they were benefited educationally from EGN reading. Jee-Won said she learned math through reading *Comic Maple Story: Math Thief*¹⁹⁴ (Group III, Week 2). Joon-Ha said he learned Chinese characters from watching *Taegeuk Thousand Characters* TV animation. Ha-Yoon mentioned she could learn Chinese characters because she read *Magic Thousand Characters Text* many times. Ha-Yoon also insisted that sometimes EGNs were useful for her school study (Group II, Week 1). The fact that Jee-Won, Joon-Ha and Ha-Yoon were the youngest of children among my focus groups should be taken into consideration – Joon-Ha and Jee-Won were seven years old and Ha-Yoon was eight years old. At an interview with me, Mrs. Han told me about her own son's case. When her son was in preschool, he was taught basic Chinese characters as Chinese language was part of the preschool's curriculum. Her son could understand and use basic characters such as 1(一), 2(二), 3(三). Then, as he started reading *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN, his Chinese characters knowledge rapidly increased. As he started practicing Chinese characters through playing the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* software for Nintendo DS, his Chinese characters knowledge increased more and faster. All these changes happened in only two years, from ages 4 to 6. Although it would be a rash conclusion to say there is any relationship between children's age

¹⁹³ Hong Jae-Chul asserts that this change can be understood as a paradigm shift. While previous EGNs' educational quality was estimated based on the amount of information contained in a book, today's EGNs are evaluated based on the effectiveness of knowledge conveyance. That is, how clearly and fully children can understand from the given information is more valued than the amount of information presented in a book (Han et al., 2008, p. 30).

¹⁹⁴ *Comic Maple Story: Math Thief* is an EGN series that explains math and logic in comics format.

and effective learning from reading EGNs, it may be worthwhile to do deeper research on this topic.

What children like in EGNs

“Do you think that all children’s books ought to have funny bits in them?” Miss Honey asked.

“I do,” Matilda said. “Children are not so serious as grown-ups and they love to laugh.”
(p.81, *Matilda*, Roald Dahl, Scholastic, 1988)

In his beloved children’s book *Matilda*, Roald Dahl revealed the truth of children and laughter through Matilda’s words. Children love to laugh. Children love fun things. Don Nilsen, English professor and humor scholar, indicates, “Humor is a very important aspect of much of children’s and adolescent literature” (1993, p. 262). As children’s literature scholar Betsy Hearne says, “there are never enough funny books for them [children]” (2007, p. 6). According to Mrs. Lee’s survey of her classroom students’ pleasure reading, most children who demonstrated their preference for EGNs indicated that they prefer reading EGNs because EGNs are “fun.” Many teachers and librarians that I interviewed also indicated “being fun” as one of the primary reasons for children’s enthusiasm on EGNs. At my focus group interviews with children, when we discussed our opinions on EGNs the most frequently stated word by children was “fun.”

Children in my focus group discussions found fun from various sources while reading EGNs. Some children said a character’s absurd behavior was funny and some laughed at puns. In her research about children’s responses to humor, Katharine H. Kappas established ten types of humor found in children’s literature. The ten categories of humor Kappas presented are exaggeration, incongruity, surprise, slapstick, the absurd, human predicament, ridicule, defiance,

violence, and verbal humor (1967, pp. 68-69). I want to add an eleventh category – toilet humor, which is somewhat similar to physical humor, but has its own unique characteristics as well. My focus group children responded to many of these humor types. Particularly, they responded to slapstick, violence, verbal, and toilet humor in reading the selected EGNs. The children not only responded to humor in the books, but also created and shared those types of humor – slapstick, violence, verbal, and toilet humor – among themselves. The humor children shared originated from the discussions around EGNs or just from random conversation. Many scholars agree that humor is a social skill (Keith-Spiegel, 1972; Kuchner, 1991; McGhee, 1989). Kuchner says, “Humor evolves through a social experience. It emerges as a form of play: language play, play with and on ideas, and play with social rules and relationships” (1991, p.1). McGhee indicates that “the early development of skills at producing humor may contribute to social development throughout childhood” (1989, p. 122). Therefore, the way children used humor in my focus group interviews discussions can be understood as a form of social interaction as well as a development process. Below is the detailed description of the children’s reactions to humor in my focus group interviews.

Slapstick

Kappas defines the slapstick type of humor as “the form of humor that depends for its effect on fast, boisterous, and zany physical activity and horseplay” (1967, p. 68). Slapstick humor emerges in the earliest stage of children’s development, along with nonsense and exaggeration (Hearne, 2007, p. 4; Kappas, 1967, p. 71). Older children – ages nine and up – still appreciate slapstick humor: Gesell, Ilg, and Ames argued that slapstick humor is the main enjoyment of children age ten and older (as cited in Zbaracki, 2003, p. 19). Children’s literature

scholar James S. Smith states, “Probably the most common of all sources of children’s humor is the physical situation with its obvious elements of contrast and surprise” (1967, p. 207).

Tomorrow’s King of Experiment is full of slapstick humor. The characters frequently slip and fall, make in ridiculous gestures, or the character’s body turns into a rock. Sometimes an arm stretches out from the word balloon and attacks the character. Although slapstick humor characterizes most characters in *Tomorrow’s King of Experiment*, the focus group children found slapstick by the principals and teachers to be the most funny. Particularly, the principal of Sae-Byuk elementary school, who represents the most authoritative figure, is described as a childish and careless person. According to children’s literature scholar Kerry Mallan, “Teachers are an obvious choice for exaggerated portraiture in children’s books, for children are experts when it comes to telling tales about this group” (1993, p.9). It appeared that the children in my focus groups also found more fun in slapstick humor featuring the teacher characters than the child characters, because they could feel as if they were overcoming authority.

Violence

Kappas describes the violence type of humor as “the release of hostility or aggression through the expression of sudden or extreme violence” (1967, pp. 68-69). Violence humor, particularly expressed through illustrations, is one of the major reasons many adults do not view EGNs positively. Parents worry that the violent images in EGNs will have a bad influence on their children – i.e., that the children will become more violent after reading the EGNs. Many EGNs indeed contain violent images. For example, in *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, there are many images of physical fights, killing, bruises and injuries. (See Figure 23.) Many parents

are concerned about the violent images of the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* series, because this series appeals to young children (ages around 5) as well as older readers.

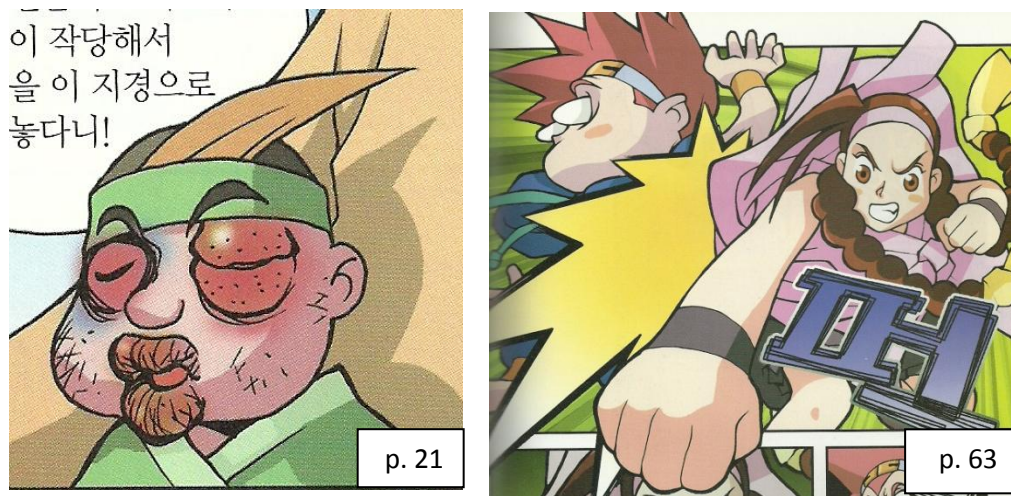


Figure 23. Violent Images from *Magic Thousand Characters Text*¹⁹⁵

In the focus group discussions, however, children received the violent illustrations without any resistance. Studies reveal that children generally do not perceive (TV) cartoons as violent, even when those cartoons are regarded as the most violent programs by adult researchers (Van der Voort, as cited in Buckingham, 2000, p. 132). Children – mostly boys – frequently showed violent behavior during the discussions¹⁹⁶. According to Kappas, it is not unusual that children who are about nine years old¹⁹⁷ reveal some hostility and aggression, because “not only do they enjoy behavior or situations of which adults disapprove and sometimes delight in the misfortunes of others, but they also find amusement in deviations from the normal and conventional” (1967, p. 72).

¹⁹⁵ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Book21.

¹⁹⁶ In one of the discussion groups, two boys even got into a physical fight once.

¹⁹⁷ The ages of my focus group children ranged from seven to eleven.

Verbal Humor

Kappas describes verbal humor as “the manipulation of language through word play, puns, jokes, sarcasm, wit, name-calling, and the like” (1967, p. 69). Verbal humor is closely related to cognitive ability. According to Whitmer, by playing with words children can “increase their vocabularies while forming new concepts and broadening old ones” (1986, p. 532). Children in my focus group discussions responded actively at most verbal humor presented in the EGNs they read. Moreover, they constantly shared puns and word play while communicating with each other. According to Kappas, verbal humor increases as a child turns nine (1967, p. 72), which is the average age of my focus group children. When a child mispronounced a word, the other children started to catch the word and play with it. Below is an example:

Dong-Hoon: You *copied* me. (* Dong-Hoon pronounced “coffee” instead of “copy.”)

Yoo-Bin: He said I *coffeed* him. Haha.

Jae-Hee: Who told you to *coffee* him?

Joo-Young: What’s all this about *coffee*?

Dong-Hoon: Who told you to *Kopi* him? Hahaha. *Kopi*! (* *Kopi* means nosebleeding in Korean.)

Yoon-Ho: *Kopi*! Hahaha.

(Group I, Week 3)

This kind of word game was frequently played among all children in all three groups at all sessions. Oftentimes children applied toilet humor vocabulary – e.g., poop, diarrhea – when playing with words.

Toilet Humor

The Urban Dictionary¹⁹⁸ defines toilet humor as a “reference to defecation, vomiting, farting and urination in a humorous way.” In scholarly literature, toilet humor is generally categorized as one type of physical humor (Shannon, 1999; Zbaracki, 2003). Hearne asserts that toilet humor is a great source of laughter for children. She adds that toilet humor is based on the notion of control of physical functions and competence, which is “basically what maturation is about” (2007, p.4).

Toilet humor is often found in *Magic Thousand Characters Text* and *Why?: Universe*, but not much in *Tomorrow’s King of Experiment*. Figure 24 is an illustration that many children found to be funny; the tree, which happens to have a mouth because of magic, shouts at Son-O-Gong, “You may sleep on my branch. But please don’t poop on me!” Figure 25 is an illustration that most children found to be hilarious. The text in this image includes verbal humor as well; this boy named the smelly shoe “Flight Super-Smelly-Feet.” As responses to this illustration, children shared toilet humor with each other or talked about whose feet smelled the most.

¹⁹⁸ The term “toilet humor” is not found in traditional dictionaries such as Merriam-Webster or Oxford.



Figure 24. An Image from *Magic Thousand Characters Text* (p.147)¹⁹⁹



Figure 25. An Image from *Why?: Universe* (p.14)²⁰⁰

Children’s literature scholar Michael Cart says, “Laughter is therapeutic. It is healing. As a tonic for what ails us... If we hurt, we laugh. And laughing, we heal” (1995, pp. 1-2). As the old adage “Laughter is the best medicine” suggests, humor heals everyone – including children.

¹⁹⁹ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Book21.

²⁰⁰ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Yearim dang.

Writer Michele Landsberg states, “Children, like all the powerless, find their best release and choicest weapon in humor; they are always ready to drop an armload of tension or anger to indulge in a liberating shout of laughter” (1992, p. 34). As seen in Chapter 2, Education Fever in Korea, Korean children suffer from too much study load. Most Korean elementary school children study from morning until night, not only at school but also through various private tutoring systems. It may be that children who are hurt and stressed out by unwanted study load have been healing themselves through reading EGNs. Humor is essential. The more the children go through unpleasant experiences that come from education fever, the more they may be drawn to EGNs that are full of humor that will heal them.

Different response to EGNs between girls and boys

In my focus group interviews, Yoo-Jin and Joo-Hee said girls usually start reading regular children’s books at second grade, while boys usually start reading regular children’s books at fourth grade. Ms. Yoon, who was a fifth grade teacher, stated that some girls in her classroom read Bernard Werber²⁰¹’s novels, which she thought were complex readings for fifth graders. On the other hand, most boys in her classroom did not want to read regular children’s books; they just craved EGNs. She assumed this difference comes from the developmental difference between girls and boys in terms of language abilities (personal communication, August 24, 2010). She is convinced of the commonly held belief that “girls’ language development is faster than boys’ and that their language abilities are superior to those boys” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 81).

²⁰¹ Bernard Werber is a French science fiction writer. His works are usually full of symbolism and tracts of philosophy.

In terms of EGNs, however, most librarians who I interviewed agreed that they saw little gender difference in children's "passion" for EGNs. However, some teachers thought boys like EGNs more than girls do. Several teachers told me that many times they caught boys reading EGNs during class. Ms. Yoon, a fifth grade teacher, insisted that boys like to read EGNs more than girls do in her classroom. She said girls like to read only certain types of EGNs, such as history EGNs or EGNs that feature a female as a primary character – e.g., a biography EGN about famous figure skater Kim Yuna. Ms. Yoon indicated this may be due to her students' ages – ages 10 to 11; girls typically begin the process of puberty at age 10 or 11, which is about fifth grade in Korea (personal communication, August 24, 2010). Still, when I visited Timber Public Library, Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom, and the school library at Crayon Elementary School, I could not find any particular difference between girls and boys in terms of their passion for EGNs. The number of girls and boys who were reading EGNs in a library were always similar. Focus group interviews with seven girls and seven boys confirmed that both girls and boys like to read EGNs.

Girls' interest in romance

There was, however, some difference in how girls and boys responded to the subject of romance. Girls liked the romance between characters, while boys were mostly not interested or ignorant of it. On the other hand, boys responded to violent illustrations more than girls did. When I asked children what they liked about *Why?: Universe*, Jee-Won and Min-Suh mentioned the parts where the primary characters expressed their affections toward characters of the other gender. See Figure 26 and Figure 27 for illustrations.



Figure 26. An Image from *Why?: Universe* (p. 69)^{202 203}



Figure 27. An Image from *Why?: Universe* (p. 125)^{204 205}

²⁰² In this image, Dr. Cheon (the man who is kissing his watch) is video chatting with his wife who is on earth; the characters in this image are travelling the universe. Dr. Cheon and his wife are both missing each other and saying sweet words to each other. The other characters (the three figures on the bottom of this image) are thinking that Dr. Cheon is too sweet.

²⁰³ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Yearimdang.

²⁰⁴ From left: Agent Hanna (smiling girl); Wu-Kae-Bi (the short alien with heart-shaped eyes); Om-Ji (the girl in the middle with big curious eyes); Dr. Cheon (the man with glasses). Wu-Kae-Bi is in love with Agent Hana: he is

When Min-Suh and Jee-Won talked about these scenes, Joo-Hee also giggled and enjoyed the discussion on romance (Group III, Week 3).

Soo-Min and Ha-Yoon liked the romance plot in *Tomorrow's King of Experiment: Competition between Acidity and Base*. Before the official discussion started, the two girls opened a page where the primary characters' diaries are described. They repeatedly read the text^{206 207} out loud and giggled.

The girls not only responded to romance plots from the EGNs, but also associated many things with romance. At the second session of the focus group interviews with Group III, the girls ate fish shaped crackers for snack. While eating, Min-Suh found two pieces of crackers stuck together. She exclaimed, "Oh, they're together! They're a couple!" She explained to me, "These two actually tried to kiss each other, but somehow they happened to cross each other on the way, and now they're back together again." Then Jee-Won continued the talk about kisses, saying, "In Harry Potter, some girl was teaching magic [to someone] and they kissed." As seen in these comments, the girls were interested in the signs of romance inside and outside the EGNs.

looking at Agent Hana and thinking, "Agent Hana is a flower in my heart." Dr. Cheon is thinking of his wife on earth: he is thinking that he will give a rose bouquet to his wife when he goes back to earth.

²⁰⁵ The permission to use this image was granted by the copyright holder Yearimdang.

²⁰⁶ Bum Woo-Joo's diary (left) reads: "Today I came across Kang Won-So, the most disgusting person in the world, and Na Ran-Ee, the most beautiful girl in the world. I found out Na Ran-Ee has been in love with the sick Kang Won-So... Maybe the brat has done something mean to her. I can't give up Na Ran-Ee!! Woo-Joo <3 (heart) Ran-Ee"

²⁰⁷ Na Ran-Ee's diary (right) reads: "I'm the most foolish girl in the world. ☹ fool fool fool fool fool fool fool fool fool fool. How will Won-So think of me? Whew... Shall I shave my hair and go to the forest? A nun is also fine... And why an earth was I caught by Woo-Joo and Ji-Man? ☹ Anyway, Ran-Ee <3 (heart) Won-So :D

Female characters for girls

For each session, I asked children who their favorite characters were from the selected EGNs for the focus group discussions. While boys were not interested²⁰⁸ in answering this question, all the girls answered enthusiastically; they shouted out the names of their favorite characters even before I finished my question. In most cases, girls in my focus groups chose female characters as their favorite characters. At the third sessions when we discussed *Why?: Universe*, Yoo-Bin, Jee-Won, Min-Suh, Joo-Hee, and Yoo-Jin all selected Agent Hana as their favorite character. Agent Hana is Dr. Cheon's cyborg assistant, who is beautiful and strong. Yoo-Bin said she liked it best when Agent Hana showed off her strength in front of other people (Group I, Week 3). Joo-Hee said she liked Om-Ji – the main female character, smart and pretty but a bit conceited – as well. (Group III, Week 3). At the fourth session when we discussed *Tomorrow's King of Experiment: Competition between Acidity and Base*, Min-Suh, Joo-Hee and Yoo-Jin said they chose Na Ran-Ee, the main female character who is passionate for experiments, as one of their favorite characters. What was different from the third session was that all of these girls mentioned many other characters as their favorite characters as well. For example, Yoo-Jin said, "[I like] the principal of Sae-Byuk Elementary School. Bum Woo-Joo is funny too; Na Ran-Ee is good; Huh-Hong is a bit weird" (Group III, Week 4). Jee-Won did not even include Na Ran-Ee as one of her favorite characters. Sam-Jang in *Magic Thousand Characters Text* received similar responses from girls in my focus group interviews. Even Om-Ji received less passionate responses than Agent Hana.

²⁰⁸ Hon-Seh Demon King from *Magic Thousand Characters Text* was the exception. Although boys generally ignored my question about their favorite characters, they expressed great curiosity about Hon-Seh Demon King at the second session. (See page 93 for more information about Hon-She Demon King.) Hon-Seh Demon King did not appear in vol. 1 (our discussion subject) but children – both boys and girls – talked about this particular character many times during the focus group interviews. Children at Group I even asked me if they could read vol. 2 of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN to see Hon-Seh Demon King; Hon-Seh Demon King appears from vol. 2 of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*.

Agent Hana is strong. While all other female characters are pretty, smart and popular, Agent Hana has one more special quality that the other girl characters do not have – a special strength. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 2, Characteristics of Educational Graphic Novels, in many EGNs the primary character is an inquisitive and lively boy; the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* series and the *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* series are two good examples. Although the *Why?* series adopts Om-Ji (girl) and Gom-Ji (boy) as two primary characters, Gom-Ji is the one who asks questions and initiates problems that leads to scientific discoveries. Therefore, Gom-Ji's progress in terms of scientific knowledge stands out more than Om-Ji's, which makes Gom-Ji seem to be the real primary character of the plot. Children's literature scholar Rudine Sims Bishop states, "[C]hildren need literature that serves as a window onto lives and experiences different from their own, and literature that serves as a mirror reflecting themselves and their cultural values, attitudes, and behaviors" (1994, xiv).

Based on my observation in Korean bookstores and public libraries, so far, Korean girls do not have enough EGNs that serve as a mirror reflecting girls and their attitude and behaviors. As mentioned earlier, Ms. Yoon said girls have less interest in EGNs than do boys in her fifth grade classroom. Ms. Yoon assumed that girls' reaching puberty may be the reason for their losing interest in EGNs. However, given the girls' enthusiastic responses to Agent Hana at the focus group discussions, another assumption seems possible: Girls may lose interest in EGNs because they cannot find enough female characters who reflect themselves.

Trading card games – boys' exclusive property

One more difference between girls' and boys' use of EGNs and related materials was trading card games. All boys in my focus group interviews said they owned and played *Magic*

Thousand Characters Text trading cards, while only few girls said they had experience playing with those cards. All boys in my focus groups said they owned *Magic Thousand Characters Text* trading cards – some said they had hundreds of them. Jae-Hee said he tried his best to collect as many cards as he could. Children said they could not buy these cards, but only could get them when purchasing merchandise that featured *Magic Thousand Characters Text* characters – e.g., EGN, cookies, and candies. Dong-Hoon said that he thought merchandise sold very well among children, because children wanted to get the trading cards (Group I, Week 2). Sung-Min proudly said he owned 1,000 *Magic Thousand Characters Text* cards when he was Korea. Soo-Min, Sung-Min's sister, said she had a few cards when she was in Korea but she lost them and sounded as if she was not sorry at all for losing them (Group II, Week 2). Yoo-Bin and Jee-Won, who had older brothers who owned hundreds of *Magic Thousand Characters Text* trading cards, also said they had a few cards but did not enjoy playing with them. Jae-Hee said only a few girls in his classroom played the trading card games (Group I, Week 1).

EGNs and Reading

The focus group discussions with children and observations at a school and public library indicated that EGNs are currently Korean children's favorite reading materials. Although some teachers and librarians considered some EGNs useful for high-interest/low-vocabulary reading, generally they had negative views on EGNs. Teachers' and librarians' largest concern was that EGNs make children lose interest in reading regular children's books. Despite their worries, however, I could see that many children also like to read regular children's books.

Teachers and librarians' views on EGNs

Teachers and librarians that I interviewed had various perspectives on EGNs. In general they had critical views on EGNs but they also acknowledged that some EGNs can be educationally useful on certain occasions.

EGNs as a trouble-maker at school

Ms. Yoon, Mrs. Lee, and Mrs. Han said they had observed children – mostly boys – gathering in groups in the classroom during breaks to read an EGN together. Teachers also said that when a student brings an EGN from home, other students take turns borrowing the book from him or her; this usually happens among boys more than it happens among girls. Ms. Yoon indicated the problem is that children cannot close the book even when the class starts. She said there are some boys in her classroom who often try to read EGNs during class, laying the EGNs wide open on their desks. Mrs. Lee said some boys in her classroom always have EGNs under their desks and try to read them whenever they have time to read. Ms. Yoon and Mrs. Lee agreed that these behaviors have a negative impact on the overall atmosphere of the class. Therefore, whenever the teachers catch a student reading an EGN during class, they confiscate the book and return it after school (Ms. Scarelt, personal communication, August 24, 2010; Mrs. Lee, personal communication, August 19, 2010).

According to the librarians that I interviewed, generally parents have two different perspectives on EGNs – some like EGNs, some do not. Most librarians indicated they get many complaints from parents about EGN collections in the library. Some parents insist all EGNs should be completely removed from libraries. Some ask librarians *not to allow* their children to check out EGNs. On the other hand, some parents request librarians to purchase more EGNs.

Some parents ask librarians to *allow* their children to check out EGNs, when the library policy is “EGNs for in-library use only.” When the parent group’s power is great, the school librarian reflects the majority of parents’ opinions – to remove EGN collections in most cases.

Even when there is no extreme pressure from parents, librarians themselves consider weeding EGN collections. Some librarians said they hesitated on whether or not to purchase new EGN series that were damaged from too much use. They said in principle a damaged collection from much use should be replaced with new copies, but because they were not fully satisfied with the artistic quality or educational effectiveness of those EGNs, they were not sure if purchasing new copies was the right thing to do for their students. Ms. Choi said because of this reason, she decided not to purchase new copies of the *Greek and Roman Mythology Reading in Graphic Novels* series. However, she still hesitated to buy new copies of the *Chinese Characters Learning* EGN series. Ms. Choi indicated that the decision was hard because most students in her school read only EGNs in the school library. She thought that children should be reading a variety of books, and it was strange to her that children were single-mindedly focused on EGNs (personal communication, August 31, 2010).

Some school librarians that I interviewed indicated that they had removed some EGNs from the school library collections or did not consider EGNs for the collection development process because of the concerns from parents, teachers, principals, or vice principals. Ms. Jeong stated that there were about 600 volumes of EGNs in her school library two years ago; the total library collection consisted of 18,000 volumes. However, some teachers and parents complained that most students visited the library just to read “useless” EGNs, which made the library look like a manhwbang²⁰⁹ (a room or café that is designed only for reading comic books). In order to resolve these complaints, Ms. Jeong removed those EGNs – that were perceived as “useless”

²⁰⁹ Manhwbang can be understood as a modern word for Dae Bon So, which was explained on page 23.

books – little by little for two years. She said now the library has 200 volumes of EGNs, which comprise about 1% of the library collection (personal communication, August 30, 2010). Ms. Kim reported that her school's vice principal had somewhat critical views on comics genre and she received a directive from the vice principal not to purchase more comic books or EGNs. She reported that the vice principal told her that he feels uncomfortable with comic books, because he did not read any comic books in his childhood days. Ms. Kim also said her school library has removed one EGN series – *Greek and Roman Mythology Reading in Graphic Novels* – in response to parents' requests. She said the parents regarded the *Greek and Roman Mythology Reading in Graphic Novels* series inappropriate for young students, because the contents and illustrations were too violent and sexually explicit. According to Ms. Kim, parents at her school are highly involved²¹⁰ in the school library management and frequently express their opinions on the library collection (personal communication, September 10, 2010). Mrs. Shin was a fourth grade teacher but was responsible for managing the school library, because there was no school librarian in her school. Mrs. Shin said her school's previous principal instructed her not to purchase any comic books, EGNs, or series books, even though there was a request from students. However, a new principal instructed her to purchase any book that students requested. Mrs. Shin said currently about 5% of the library collection at her school is EGNs. On average, EGNs consisted of 4-5% of the total library collection in the libraries of school librarians and public librarians that I interviewed.

²¹⁰ In Ms. Kim's school, at the beginning of each semester, two parents for each classroom are elected as "honorary teachers." These honorary teachers take turns working as the school library staffs from 11:40 a.m. to 1:40 p.m. during the semester and several hours during summer and winter breaks; on average one honorary teacher works in the school library 2-3 times a year. In addition to the "honorary teachers" system, some parents voluntarily formed a group that reads children's books to students who visit the school library. This parent group also regularly performs a show for students every year and helps the librarian publish a monthly journal that introduces the school library's events, book recommendations, etc. (personal communication, September 10, 2010).

The librarians who told me about their EGN weeding experience all indicated that students complained tremendously about the disappeared EGNs. Ms. Song said when she removed some EGN collections without notice, students resisted, but she calmed them down by saying the books were removed because they were old (personal communication, October 21, 2010). Ms. Kim said when she first started working at her current school library a few years ago, she was very surprised to see that the majority of children checked out only comic books or EGNs from the library. Therefore, she made a library policy that allowed students to borrow one EGN/comic book only when she/he borrows one regular children's book²¹¹. Later she changed the policy to completely forbid students from borrowing comic books or EGNs from the school library. She said she thought students would resist less because she changed the policy gradually, but students' complaints were beyond her expectation. Students asked her questions such as "EGNs are educational materials. Why can't I borrow an educational book?", "What is your reason for forbidding us from checking out EGNs?", and "Can I check out at least one EGN?" Ms. Kim said as time went by, "children learned to control their cravings for EGNs and comic books" and now most children follow the library policy (personal communication, September 10, 2010).

Negative views on EGNs

Ms. Kim noted that EGNs represent the "sad reality of our children who lost the pure joy of books and reading." She felt sorry for Korean children these days because they can feel secure

²¹¹ This policy reminds us of common library policies in the nineteenth century in the U.S. that allowed readers to "withdraw two books, but the second book had to be nonfiction" (Ross, 1987, p. 157). Both the librarians in the nineteenth century in the U.S. and Ms. Kim seem to believe the metaphor of reading, "reading is eating," which is that "it is harmful to consume too much of the same kind of reading," just as "a balanced diet is crucial to healthy development" (Ross, p. 157).

only when they think about learning while reading books. Ms. Kim insisted EGNs are mere disposable fun items that lure Korean children's minds; although the EGN publishers advocate educational aspect of EGNs, she thinks EGNs deliver only very shallow information (September 10, 2010). Teachers and librarians that I interviewed generally had more negative views than positive views on EGNs. They said most EGNs' illustrations are artistically of bad quality and the text is poorly written – incomplete sentences, provocative expressions, and slang prevail. Incorrect information was also indicated as a problem. Their largest concern was that EGNs make children lose interest in reading regular children's books.

Many librarians agreed that children who start reading with picture books naturally gain interest in regular children's books and eventually become "readers." They thought, however, that EGNs do not encourage children to move on to the next stage of reading but rather hold children at a lower stage of reading. Mrs. Han said that she used to have relatively positive views on EGNs. She had thought that some EGNs such as the *Why?* series are good enough to recommend because children can actually learn good information from reading those books. However, as her own son grew older, her perspective on EGNs changed. Mrs. Han said her son used to like reading picture books very much; he was a "reader," but as he began to read EGNs his love for regular children's books cooled down. Whenever he had to read a regular children's book, he did not read it elaborately but quickly skimmed through it. He often could not answer well when Mrs. Han asked him questions about the book he had just read. Mrs. Han suspected that EGN reading had changed the reading skills of her son. As EGNs are easily read with no extra attention, her son might have used the "no extra attention" approach even when he read regular children's books (personal communication, August 17, 2010).

Ms. Jeong insisted one of the side effects of EGN reading is that children just want to view the comic illustrations regardless of the content of the book. In her library, many children checked out the same EGNs repeatedly even though they had read the same copies many times. When she asked the children why they borrowed those EGNs again, children complained that there was nothing else to check out in the school library. One child said, “I don’t remember the story (of this EGN). Plus, there isn’t any other book I can read.” Ms. Jeong said the library did have a big collection of children’s books; it was just that EGNs comprised a small portion of the collection – about 1% of the total library collection. Ms. Jeong said those children who complained about having no books to read in the library were so used to EGNs that they did not dare to try reading other types of books; it might be hard for them to try books without comic illustrations (personal communication, August 30, 2010).

Good EGNs?

Mrs. Han categorized EGNs into two different groups – books that children read just for fun but that have no educational effect and books that are actually educational like the *Why?* series. Mrs. Han said those who can and like to read thoroughly the latter sort of books are students who have interest in studying and students who are willing to learn new information. According to her, “educational” EGNs provide knowledge that requires basic ability to understand new information. Thus, only children who have basic knowledge on the given subject and enthusiasm for learning can truly enjoy reading such books. Then these children become more knowledgeable and search for another “educational” EGN that will stimulate their intellectual curiosity. On the other hand, children who have no interest in learning just go for comics or EGNs that have no nutritional quality but are just hilariously fun. Mrs. Han wished

children who are behind could read more educational EGNs so that they can follow up on the school curriculum, but based on her experience those kids do not have any interest in reading such books. Mrs. Han worried that this pattern would eventually broaden the gap between students who excel and students who are behind (personal communication, August 17, 2010).

Ms. Yoon was generally critical about EGNs but she noted that she once assigned an EGN for her classroom reading. Her classroom ran a program that aimed for students to read four books every five weeks. The EGN she assigned for this program was *Hanbok*²¹²: *Our Clothes that Resemble Nature*, created by a comics artist Lee A-In. Ms. Yoon said that if she had chosen a book about *hanbok* that was explained only with text, many students would not have wanted to read it. She also said students might have acquired a bad impression of *hanbok* or felt that *hanbok* and Korean history are boring. However, after reading this EGN all her students told her they really enjoyed the book. Students also told her they never knew that *hanbok* was such wonderful clothing. After this experience, Ms. Yoon thought, “Aha. This is children. They like it very much when information is explained in easy ways such as in comics format.” Ms. Yoon said this experience made her realize that some EGNs can be good supplementary materials for learning (personal communication, August 24, 2010).

²¹² *Hanbok* is traditional Korean clothing.



Figure 28. A Page from *Hanbok: Our Clothes that Resemble Nature*²¹³

Some teachers and librarians noted that comics can be a good format to explain certain subjects such as history and geography to children.

EGNs as high-interest/low-vocabulary reading

Deborah Glasser indicated that *Archie* is excellent material for “high-interest/low-vocabulary reading” because it is written at the second-grade level, although the story is about high school students (as cited in Krashen, 2004, p. 100). According to some teachers and librarians that I interviewed, the same theory can be applied to EGNs. Ms. Yoon said whenever she gave her students free time to read, some girls who found it hard to read regular children’s books read EGNs and told Ms. Yoon that they read “books” (personal communication, August 24, 2010). Ms. Jeong indicated that EGNs let children feel close to books and reading, thus guiding children to develop their skills toward reading books with more text and smaller fonts

²¹³ http://www.openkid.co.kr/book/view.aspx?book_code=B_CAAGBABH0004

(personal communication, August 30, 2010). Mrs. Park said she has a positive view of EGNs because even a child who never wants to read a book that has any relationship with learning wants to read an EGN. She said that from this EGN reading experience a child would eventually be able to learn the joy of reading (personal communication, September 11, 2010). Ms. Kim said that even though she did not positively view “comics that are packaged in the name of education,” these books could be at least some help to children who have difficulty reading regular children’s books. She hoped EGN reading could lead these children to more complex readings²¹⁴ (personal communication, September 10, 2010).

Need for selection criteria

All elementary schools in Korea allocate certain hours to reading education. Sometimes a classroom teacher brings the students to the school library and lets them read any books in the library. In other cases students sit at their own desks and read either books they borrowed from the school library or the classroom library, or books they brought from home. Not all books are allowed. Whether or not a book is appropriate to read during the reading hour is entirely the classroom teacher’s decision. Students often bring their own EGNs to read during reading hours. All four teachers that I interviewed noted they do not have any settled criteria to assess those EGNs. They told their students that “educational” EGNs are okay, but they could not explain what exactly “educational” EGNs were. The teachers looked at the book cover, briefly skimmed through the book, and decided whether to prohibit or not. In general, EGNs that are widely

²¹⁴ Ms. Kim’s opinion is in agreement with the metaphor, “reading is a ladder,” which was common among nineteenth century librarians in the U.S. According to Catherine Sheldrick Ross, public librarians in the nineteenth century in the U.S. believed that a librarian’s role is to elevate library users’ reading taste and guide readers from lower to higher sorts of books. The basic concept is that “books can be objectively ranked on a scale of quality from low to high” (Ross, 1987, p. 147; p. 150).

known to be educational – e.g., the *Why?* series – were allowed, but EGNs that are related to online games were prohibited.

Ms. Yoon said the decision can be very subjective. Her strategy was to read the student's response. When she suspects an EGN to be inappropriate for reading hours, she asks the student who was reading that EGN, "Is this really an Educational Graphic Novel?" If the student suddenly shrinks and hides the book under the desk she is convinced she can ban the book. If the EGN is really an educational one, the student starts to explain which part is educational and which part is related to the curriculum. Then she looks at the book briefly and allows it. Ms. Yoon said most children already know what is educational and what is not (personal communication, August 17, 2010). Mrs. Shin also said the criteria to decide whether an EGN is appropriate for reading is vague and obscure. According to her, even some popular EGNs that are generally recognized as somewhat educational sometimes do not contain enough information (personal communication, August 19, 2010).

The librarians that I interviewed did not have fixed criteria for EGN collections either. Each librarian had her own ways to select EGNs for her library. The criteria included trustworthiness of the author and publisher, quality of humor, ratio of educational elements to entertaining elements – educational elements should dominate – and quality of text. Books with slang and violent or sexually explicit illustrations were excluded. Some librarians considered children's requests. However, the criteria for each librarian were different.

Mrs. Lee insisted that special criteria for EGNs should be established. According to her, most teachers do not have confidence about whether they should encourage or prohibit EGN reading. Therefore, some teachers allow their students to read EGNs, some decide based on her/his own subjective standards, some completely ban EGNs and others avoid the decision and

let children themselves decide. Mrs. Lee said the lack of appropriate criteria for EGNs brings confusion to teachers and to a school's general atmosphere regarding reading education (personal communication, August 19, 2010).

Teachers and librarians, comic book readers or not

Interestingly, most librarians – five out of six – indicated that currently they are comic book readers, while all four teachers said they are not comic book readers. The librarians revealed that they have always been comic book readers; some said they used to read EGNs as well when they were young. Two teachers reported that they read some comic books when they were teenagers, but have not read a single copy since they entered college. Whether a librarian/teacher was a comic book reader or not had nothing to do with her age. For example, a librarian in her forties identified herself as a comic book reader, while a teacher in her thirties identified herself as a non-comic book reader.

Most teachers were not familiar with currently popular EGNs. Most librarians, on the other hand, were quite familiar with the content and structure of EGNs in their library collections. Only one teacher, who had a six-year-old son, said she read several volumes of EGNs. The other three teachers said they do not “read” EGNs. They knew some popular titles and they often skimmed through EGNs that students brought school to examine whether those books were appropriate or not, but they have never seriously looked into the content.

Obsession with education

During the focus group interviews, children expressed the pressure they get to study. Children of Group III often told me about their study load. Although they had been living in the

U.S. [for more than several months but less than a year], all of the girls said they had to study in accordance with a Korean school's curriculum as well. It seemed to be common for Korean visiting scholars to teach their children following Korean schools' curriculum while they stay in the U.S. Some parents told me they did so because they worried that if their children would have fallen behind other students when they go back to Korea. Below is what children said about their extra study load:

Min-Suh: "After I finish American homework, I have to work on Korean homework.

Uhm, during weekdays I solve two workbooks from Korea every day. During weekends, I mean on Saturdays and Sundays, I do three workbooks a day – five pages for each (workbook)."

Yoo-Jin: "Hey, I didn't even finish third grade²¹⁵ second semester chapter four yet. I have to work on that tonight again."

Min-Suh: "I am almost finished with science. I already completed Korean (language subject) – I finished it a few months ago. And then, math..."

Yoo-Jin: "I'll tell you what. We're better than the others²¹⁶." (Group III, Week 4)

Joo-Hee said her mother tried to get her to register for a mathematics competition that is held in Korea, but she resisted. When I asked her how she could join the competition when she was in the U.S., the children said there is a way to make it work. Yoo-Jin said she once had joined the Korean mathematics competition while she was in the U.S. (Group III, Week 4)

²¹⁵ Yoo-Jin was in fourth grade in the U.S. school, but if she had been in Korea she would be in third grade. This is due to the difference in the semester start date between the two countries. In Korea a new semester starts in March, while in the U.S. a new semester starts in September.

²¹⁶ Yoo-Jin meant that other Korean children study more than they – Min-Suh and Yoo-Jin – did in the U.S. school.

Children of Group II once discussed how their parents and teachers restricted their EGN reading in Korea. Ha-Yoon said her teacher confiscated EGNs if students brought them to school. Soo-Min said her teacher forbade any EGNs except a few history EGNs. Sung-Min said his teacher even forbade the *Why?* series, because it contains illustrations. Sung-Min said his teacher only let the students read regular children's books with no illustrations. Sung-Min and Soo-Min said their parents did not allow online video games or Nintendo DS games. Sung-Min told me the reason that parents and teachers restricted EGN reading must be because of the college entrance exam. That is, Sung-Min thought the adults controlled children's reading because children should not waste their time on what is not helpful for preparing for the college entrance examination. (Group II, Week 1). Sung-Min was a seven year old boy. A seven-year-old boy knew he should prepare for the college entrance exam: this is vivid proof of education fever in Korea.

Not only children and parents but also teachers felt stress due to the obsession with education. Mrs. Han noted that an education policy that is passed down from the main government forces teachers to force students to study more rather than encourage them to read books. The essence of the policy is to make all students learn and none left behind²¹⁷. According to Mrs. Han, the government pays too much attention to assessing students' learning achievement. They calculate the number of students who do not meet the minimum achievement standards per classroom and per school. If the statistics say there is a student who is left behind in a classroom, it is considered the fault of the classroom teacher. Therefore, teachers try to do whatever they can do to make all their students meet the minimum achievement standards. Mrs.

²¹⁷ This policy can be compared to the No Child Left Behind Act in the U.S. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, signed into law by President Bush on January 8, 2002, required "a number of measures designed to drive broad gains in student achievement and to hold states and schools more accountable for student progress" (Education Week, 2011). The measures include annual testing, academic progress of students, report cards, and teacher qualifications (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Han said she had been distributing extra workbook papers to her students for the last few years to make them study more. Personally she wanted to encourage more reading among her students, but in order to survive in the school community she had to focus more on educating her students for taking standardized tests (personal communication, August 17, 2010).

Children reading other books

According to Mrs. Lee's survey on children's reading behavior, twenty-one among thirty-two students stated they prefer reading EGNs to reading regular children's books; the other eleven students²¹⁸ preferred reading regular children's books to reading EGNs. That is, although 66% of Mrs. Lee's students preferred EGNs, still 34% of them preferred regular children's books²¹⁹. Children stated they preferred regular children's books because those are "long and detailed", "full of wisdom", "more effective for learning", and "have richer text." One child insisted that reading regular children's books stimulates one's brain activity. Four children simply said regular children's books are more fun than EGNs. As mentioned earlier, Yoo-Jin and Min-Suh in my focus groups noted that some educational subjects such as history are much more fun in a regular children's book format (Group III, Week 1).

²¹⁸ This number may not accurately represent students' true opinions of EGNs, because this survey was done in a classroom and conducted by their homeroom teacher. Although Mrs. Lee told children that they did not need to write down their names because it was an anonymous survey and that the survey results would not affect student evaluation, some children may have felt pressure to behave like a "good kid"; they might have thought "regular children's book" would be the answer that pleases the teacher.

²¹⁹ The titles of the regular children's books that these children indicated as their favorites include *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Little Prince*, *The Little Match Girl*, *George's Marvelous Medicine*, and *Folklore Collection for Third Graders*. The children mentioned more about books written by Korean authors than books written by foreign authors, but I purposely introduced only the titles of books written by foreign authors here, because the main audience of this research is American.

Regular children's books

In my focus group interviews with Group III, Min-Suh and Yoo-Jin said they like to read “thick books that have long stories with tiny little letters in them” [a direct quote from Yoo-Jin’s comment]; she emphasized “tiny little letters” many times when describing regular children’s books or educational information descriptions of EGNs (Group III, Week 1). Joo-Hee also read regular children’s books, but she seemed to prefer EGNs. Focus group discussions with Group I and Group III were conducted at my house in the living room. There was a bookshelf in my living room which was stacked with EGNs and children’s books of my own. After each session I allowed children to borrow one book each. As soon as the session ended all the children dived into the bookshelf and picked up EGNs. Min-Suh was the only one who chose a regular children’s book. When Min-Suh picked a regular children’s book while others were holding EGNs, Joo-Hee asked her with truly wondering face, “Why are you picking up that book?” For Joo-Hee, it was natural for a child to choose an EGN when there is a variety of choices.

The titles of regular children’s books²²⁰ that Min-Suh, Joo-Hee and Yoo-Jin said they had read include the *Harry Potter* series, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, *Daddy-Long-Legs* (an abridged version), *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*, *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Mechanical Prince*²²¹, and *The Secret Garden*²²². In Group I and Group II, some children – Dong-Hoon, Jae-Hee, and Sung-Min –

²²⁰ The titles of regular children’s books that Min-Suh, Joo-Hee and Yoo-Jin mentioned are mostly American and British children’s books. I assume that they had mentioned these books because they were in the U.S.; they might have read these books before coming to the U.S. or while they were in the U.S. because their parents might have thought that reading these books would be helpful in complementing the American curriculum. If I conducted the focus group interviews with children who were in Korea, the answers might have been different: most children would have mentioned the titles of Korean children’s books.

²²¹ *The Mechanical Prince* is a German children’s book written by Andreas Steinhofel. The original title is *Der Mechanische Prinz*.

²²² They read all these books in the Korean language; they told me the Korean titles.

mentioned they like reading regular children's books as well, but they did not give me any book titles. Joon-Ha, Hee-Joon and Joo-Young said they do not read any regular children's books.

The school librarian at Crayon Elementary School told me that although EGNs are the most popular items for in-library use, the books children check out vary. She said children check out almost all genres that are in the library collection – novels, picture books, non-fiction, etc. (personal communication, September 7, 2011). During lunch hours and after school dismissal I could observe many students browsing the bookshelves and checking out what they selected from the bookshelves. From time to time I could verify the books children checked out and turned in. In general, younger children who were in first and second grades checked out and turned in the *Why?* series and picture books the most. Older children checked out and turned in more diverse types of books. Non-fiction books and novels were the most circulated books among older students. Some girls checked out very thick novels; one girl chose a book from a collection for teachers and parents.

As noted earlier, quite a few students chose novels, picture books, and non-fiction for in-library use at school library of Crayon Elementary School²²³. Many children who selected novels for in-library reading used the reading desks: However overcrowded the library was, they sat down on their own and read²²⁴. Picture books and non-fiction books were popular items to read with peers. I could observe some groups of children gathering and reading a non-fiction book or a picture book together. There was no particular gender or age that preferred this group reading. There were groups of girls, boys, younger children and older children who read together with one book. The children who read together with one book were either silent or aloud.

²²³ See page 118 for details.

²²⁴ These children concentrated on reading in straight posture however crowded the library was. This was impressive to me.

In Timber Public Library, although EGNs were the most popular in-library use item, they were rarely checked out. On my first visit to the school library at Crayon Elementary School, there was a group of boys who sat next to each other, reading. Among them four boys read EGNs and one read a black and white general comic book. After fifteen minutes of reading four boys stood up to go home; one boy who was reading a general comic book said he would remain. Among the four boys who stood up, two went right to the 900s: History section (according to KDC), picked a few hardbound biography non-fiction books, and checked them out at the circulation desk. On my third visit to the library, I saw another group of boys who were chatting around a science EGN series section. Below is part of their conversation:

Boy 1: “Do you think I should borrow this book (a science EGN)?”

Boy 2: “Haven’t you read it yet?”

Boy 1: “I guess I have.”

Boy 2: “Doesn’t your mom say anything if you borrow it?”

Boy 3: “Borrow and return it right away.”

Boy 1: “Oh, well.”

This boy (Boy 1) hesitated for a while but soon gave up borrowing the EGN. The boys hung out around another section – where history EGNs were located – for a while and went out of the library, borrowing nothing. It seemed that all these boys knew their mothers would not like it if they borrowed an EGN from the library. What Boy 3 said (“Borrow and return it right away.”) must have meant to borrow the EGN in secret, away from the mother’s attention.

When parents came to pick up their children, children who were reading EGNs had to close the books and followed their parents. Sometimes the parents were already carrying

children's books with them that they had selected on their own for their children – which means the children did not have an opportunity to choose their own books. In other cases, parents and children browsed the bookshelves together to select books to borrow. In these cases, the most preferred sections were the 800s: Literature and 900s: History²²⁵. When children came into the library with their mothers, they usually went right to the 800s: Literature section. Some parents visited the library alone: they came in with a big bag full of books, returned them at the circulation desk, selected new books to borrow, checked them out, and left. From their opening the library door to leaving took only ten minutes on average. Parents who came in alone liked to browse the English books section²²⁶ the most, and then the 800s and 900s sections. Although parents of elementary school students generally forbade borrowing EGNs, some toddlers' parents allowed borrowing a few EGNs, according to my observation at Timber Public Library.

General comic books

At the school library of Crayon Elementary School, the most frequently read regular children's comic books were *Jjang-Ddong-Yee*²²⁷, *Barefoot Gen*²²⁸, and *Manhwa Seo-Yoo-Gi*²²⁹; there were not many sorts of regular children's books in the school library. The librarian said she did not give priority to comic books when working on collection development. A few children

²²⁵ They may have gone to the 800s and the 900s sections because they needed to borrow books for the school's required reading. In general, Korean elementary schools' required reading is focused on literature and history.

²²⁶ There was a separate bookshelf for English children's books in Timber Public Library.

²²⁷ *Jjang-Ddong-Yee* is a Korean comic book series that is based on author Oh Jin-Hee's peaceful childhood memories growing up in a rural area in Korea.

²²⁸ *Barefoot Gen* is a Japanese comic book series that is based on author Keiji Nakazawa's own experience as a Hiroshima survivor.

²²⁹ *Manhwa Seo-Yoo-Gi* is a comic book version of a Chinese classic *Going to the West* (西遊記) that is edited and illustrated by a Korean comics artist.

that I observed at Timber Public Library also read black and white regular children's comic books entitled *Manhwa Sam-Kook-Ji*²³⁰ and *Manhwa Cho-Han-Ji*²³¹.

Children in my focus group discussions said they liked general comic books as well. Interestingly, they talked more about cartoons that are broadcast on TV than hardcopy comic books. Children talked a lot about two TV channels – EBS²³² (Education Broadcasting System) and Tooniverse. Tooniverse is a Korean cartoon channel similar to Cartoon Network in the U.S. Titles of TV cartoons or hardcopy comic books that children said they liked include *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, *One Piece*²³³, *Crayon Shin-chan*²³⁴, *Tales Runner*²³⁵, *Grandchase*²³⁶, *Candy Candy*²³⁷, *Barbie*, *Doraemon*²³⁸, *Detective Conan*²³⁹, *My Guardian Characters*²⁴⁰, and *Power Rangers*²⁴¹. I did not differentiate TV cartoons and hardcopy books here, because many of them were created and released in both formats. Most children were familiar with comics that aired on Cartoon Network. It seemed that many parents allowed their children to watch Tooniverse, because they thought this channel focused on a child audience. Still, some children noted that their parents forbade them from watching Tooniverse and allowed only the EBS channel.

²³⁰ *Manhwa Sam-Kook-Ji* is a comic book version of a Chinese classic *Records of Three Kingdoms* (三國志) that is edited and illustrated by Korean comics artists.

²³¹ *Manhwa Cho-Han-Ji* is a comic book version of a Chinese classic 楚漢志 that is edited and illustrated by a Korean comics artist.

²³² As mentioned in page 104, EBS is the most reputable education-focused broadcasting company in Korea (Hong, S., 2010).

²³³ *One Piece* is a Japanese comic book originally created by Eiichiro Oda.

²³⁴ *Crayon Shin-chan* is a Japanese comic book that was created by Yoshito Usui.

²³⁵ *Tales Runner* was originally created as an online game by Rhaon Entertainment, a Korean game company. It was published in comic book format as well.

²³⁶ *Grandchase* was originally created as a MMORPG by a Korean game company KOG Studios. It was published in comic book format as well.

²³⁷ *Candy Candy* is a Japanese comic book that was originally created by Kyoko Mizuki and Yumiko Igarashi.

²³⁸ *Doraemon* is a Japanese comics series that was originally created by Fujiko F. Fujio.

²³⁹ *Detective Conan* is a Japanese comics series created by Gosho Aoyama.

²⁴⁰ *My Guardian Characters* is a Japanese comics series created by Peach-Pit.

²⁴¹ *Power Rangers* is an American entertainment and merchandising franchise based on the Japanese comic book *Tokusatsu Super Sentai*.

Another reason that children talked more about TV cartoons than hardcopy comic books may be due to the limited number of comic books that are published for children in Korea nowadays. Joo-Hee commented, “Strangely, there are more Educational Graphic Novels than general comic books in Korea. I think that is odd” (Group III, Week 1). In fact, in many cases, topics that have nothing to do with education are published in EGN format – B5 size, fixed thickness, paper quality the same as traditional books – and are displayed along with other EGNs in bookstores; *I Love Scary Stories*²⁴² is one example. Ms. Song described such books as “comic books that are wearing a mask of education” (personal communication, October 21, 2010). During my focus group interviews, children often used the terms “comic books” and “EGNs” interchangeably. As the majority of “comic books” they observed were EGNs, many Korean children these days seemed to regard EGNs in the same light as general comic books. According to comics critic Park In-Ha, after the economic crisis in Korea money came to rule everything. Parents’ lust for money gave birth to obsession with education²⁴³, which brought Educational Graphic Novels top place among all children’s comic books. Park argues that Korean children need to have “real children’s comic books,” not “children’s comic books that are camouflaged with education” – EGNs (2009).

²⁴² *I Love Scary Stories* is a scary comic book series that was published from 2002 to 2004 by ILB. Korean children “love” this book. *I Love Scary Stories: Vol. 1* was one of the most popular books that the focus group children borrowed from my bookshelf. When I worked in a public library in 2003 in Korea, it was one of the most popular in-library use books in our children’s library.

²⁴³ Education – more specifically, a degree from a good university – is regarded as the most essential requirement for leading a successful life in Korea.

EGNs and Media Intertextuality

EGNs are created in diverse media formats. The focus group discussions with children indicated that Korean children skillfully use the diverse media formats that originated from the EGNs. Moreover, the children demonstrated that they can easily cross boundaries between texts and genres and incorporate elements from diverse content sources.

Media intertextuality

Some EGN series, including *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, are regarded as good examples of OSMU (One Source Multi Use) in Korea (Han et al., 2004; Joe, 2007; Lyou & Seo, 2008). As explained before²⁴⁴, OSMU is recognized as a business model that maximizes added value by applying one content source to various fields and genres. Digital media scholars Lyou and Seo insist that OSMU in Korea has been focusing mainly on the business management perspective, which is to make the best profit from diverse fields (2008, p. 441). This business structure of OSMU is similar to “commercial transmedia supersystems” that were mentioned by media scholar Marsha Kinder; Kinder implied that by learning and using transmedia intertextuality²⁴⁵ and expanding networks, corporations can increase chances of yielding a profit (p. 38). Researchers assert that these interactions between media not only maximize profits but also provide a coherent environment for children:

Surrounded by multimedia, children have no difficulty in shifting from one medium to another. While adults see the multimediatization of cultural firms such as Nintendo, Disney and other American majors as harmful (it enables these firms to market a wide

²⁴⁴ See page 93 for more information.

²⁴⁵ The Oxford Dictionaries defines intertextuality as “the relationship between texts, especially literary ones.”

range of products derived from a film or videogame), children find the recurrence of signs reassuring in their attempts to organize environment.

(LaFrance, 1996, p.313; Kline, 1993, as cited in Livingstone & Bovill, 2000, ch.3, p.5).

The term intertextuality was first coined by Julia Kristeva (1967) “as a translation of Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of ‘dialogism’ to denote forms of interaction between different texts within a single medium, notably the book” (Drotner, 2000, p. 158). These days, the term has come to include more meanings and is applied to interactions between many different genres and media (Drotner, 2000, p. 158; Irwin, 2004, p. 228). Media scholar Kirsten Drotner classifies intertextuality into three different categories:

Intra-textuality: connections between different texts within the same medium

Inter-textuality: connections across different types of media

Trans-textuality: connections between media and other real-life actions

(Drotner, as cited in Livingstone & Bovill, 2000, ch.3, p. 5)

EGNs and intertextuality

The focus group discussions with children demonstrated that Korean children’s EGN reading is connected to all three kinds of intertextuality – intra-textuality, inter-textuality, and trans-textuality – as described by Drotner. Children follow up their interests in a particular subject by reading other EGNs; **intra-textuality**. For example, Dong-Hoon indicated that when he finds an EGN interesting, he looks up the advertisement page at the back of the EGN; usually the publishers introduce other EGNs that contain similar subjects. Dong-Hoon said he read many history EGNs using this method (Group I, Week 1). Soo-Min said that Sung-Min, her younger

brother, is particularly interested in science subjects, therefore likes to read EGNs that deal with these (Group II, Week 3).

As noted earlier, EGNs show **inter-textuality** by being in diverse media formats. The content sources of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, *Why?*, and *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* are produced in diverse media formats including EGNs, digital books, movies, musicals, portable games software (for Nintendo DS), 3D TV animation, online video games, trading card games, children's merchandise, applications and e-books for tablet PCs and smart phones, and theme parks. Children in the focus group discussions followed up their interests across diverse media. Taking *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, for example, the children usually got acquainted with the characters and plots through reading the EGN. The *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN has been a universally read series in Korea. Then they became more familiar with the characters, plots, and Chinese characters (the educational element) through watching the digital book, playing the Nintendo DS game and playing trading card games. They often checked out the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* official website to see when the next volume would come out.

Trans-textuality also existed in Korean children's EGN use. According to Livingstone and Bovill, trans-textuality can be found when there is resonance between the content of media and children's own lives. For example, a child may like to watch a television program that portrays a family that is similar to her/his own. In addition, a child may reflect images and themes she/he learned from watching a television program similar to her/his own life (Livingstone & Bovill, 2000, ch.3, p.6). Many EGNs present elementary school students as primary characters. The characters in EGNs go to school or *hagwon*²⁴⁶ or are privately tutored for extra study, get in trouble with friends, and fall in one-sided love – e.g., *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*. The other EGNs that are not described in the school setting – e.g., *Why?: Universe* –

²⁴⁶ See page 35 for more information.

or that do not present elementary school students as primary characters – e.g., *Magic Thousand Characteres Text* – also portray their characters as going through certain experiences to “learn” new information. “To learn” is what all children are required to do in Korea. While observing the EGNs’ primary characters go through difficulties and make mistakes to acquire information, Korean children can resonate with the characters, because making mistakes and experiencing difficulties to learn new information are what they often do in their daily lives. Korean children can also reflect in their own lives the adventurous attitude they observed from the EGN characters, thus exerting themselves to learn better at school and private tutoring.

Children as skillful users of diverse media

Buckingham says, “Children’s media culture is rarely medium-specific: it crosses the boundaries between texts and between traditional media forms” (2007, p.80). The focus group children demonstrated they are skillful users of the media culture as Buckingham describes, by crossing the boundaries between different texts and media forms.

Why?: Universe explains the universe with stars, planets, nebulae, and black holes. It also describes how humans have observed, studied, and approached the universe throughout history. In the third session of focus group interviews, I asked the children to draw pictures of themselves traveling the universe. Children were asked to pick one star/planet/nebula/etc. from *Why?: Universe*; the chosen star/planet/nebula/etc. would be a destination of their trip in the universe. I suggested cartoon drawing as one option for this activity, although it was not required.

Koreans have traditionally believed that a rabbit lives on the moon and makes rice cakes using a big mortar. Children learn this legend through both oral and print traditions. This “rabbit on the moon” legend is briefly mentioned in *Why?: Universe*. When the five characters arrive on

the moon, Gom-Ji (the boy character) says, “As we are on the moon, I want to meet the moon rabbit!” Wu-Kae-Bi (the alien from Andromeda) asks what the moon rabbit is and Gom-Ji answers, “The rabbit who makes rice cakes using a mortar! You must not have seen it, either. Has anyone seen the moon rabbit here?” Dr. Cheon tells Gom-Ji, “Hey, that’s just a tale in the story book. There is neither water nor air on the moon, so a living thing cannot live here. So, wake up from your dream.” Gom-Ji becomes terrified and screams, “Oh, my dream is all cracked!” (p. 39). Although Dr. Cheon clarifies in the text that the moon rabbit does not exist in reality, some children drew the moon rabbit in their pictures. Yoon-Ho drew his pictures in a comics format. Yoon-Ho used four pages of paper and filled those pages with brief but interesting plots and humor. One of the plots is about a man who landed on the moon. There he met a rabbit that suggested they make rice cakes together, but the man refused. The rabbit got mad and kicked him off the moon. The man landed on a planet where a bad man was stealing money from a poor person. Yoo-Bin and Dong-Hoon also drew pictures of a rabbit on the moon. Yoon-Ho said the characters in his drawings came from Zolaman, a popular Korean cartoon character. The rabbit drawn by Yoo-Bin did not make rice cake using a big mortar but was pumping the toilet using a plunger; the rabbit in her drawing was Mashimaro, a popular Korean cartoon character²⁴⁷. Dong-Hoon drew both the rabbit in Korean folklore and Mashimaro. These three children easily crossed boundaries between texts and genres and incorporated elements from diverse content sources.

²⁴⁷ The fact that Mashimaro pumps the toilet using a plunger instead of making rice cake using a big mortar is a conscious joke. The Mashimaro character was created by Korean comics artist Kim Jae-In in 2000. Kim released flash animations of this character online, which made Mashimaro a very popular character among Koreans as well as people of other Asian countries. Now the character has been made into many commercial products, including dolls and stationaries.

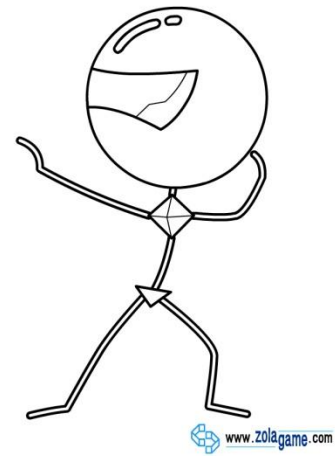
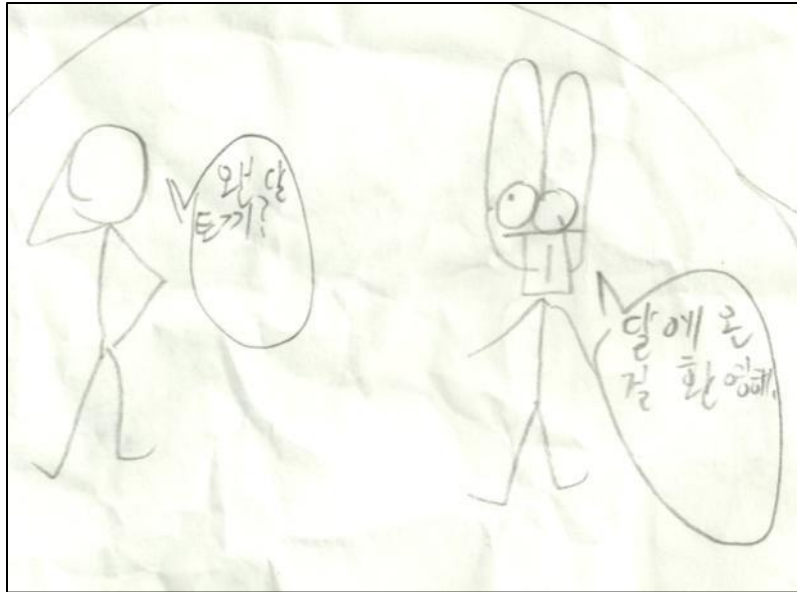


Figure 29. Part of Yoon-Ho's Drawing²⁴⁸ in Response to *Why?: Universe* (left) and Zolaman Character²⁴⁹ (right)

²⁴⁸ The rabbit on the right is saying "Welcome to the moon." The man on the left is saying "The moon rabbit?"

²⁴⁹ <http://l.yimg.com/ne/kids/paper/img/zolaman0008.jpg>

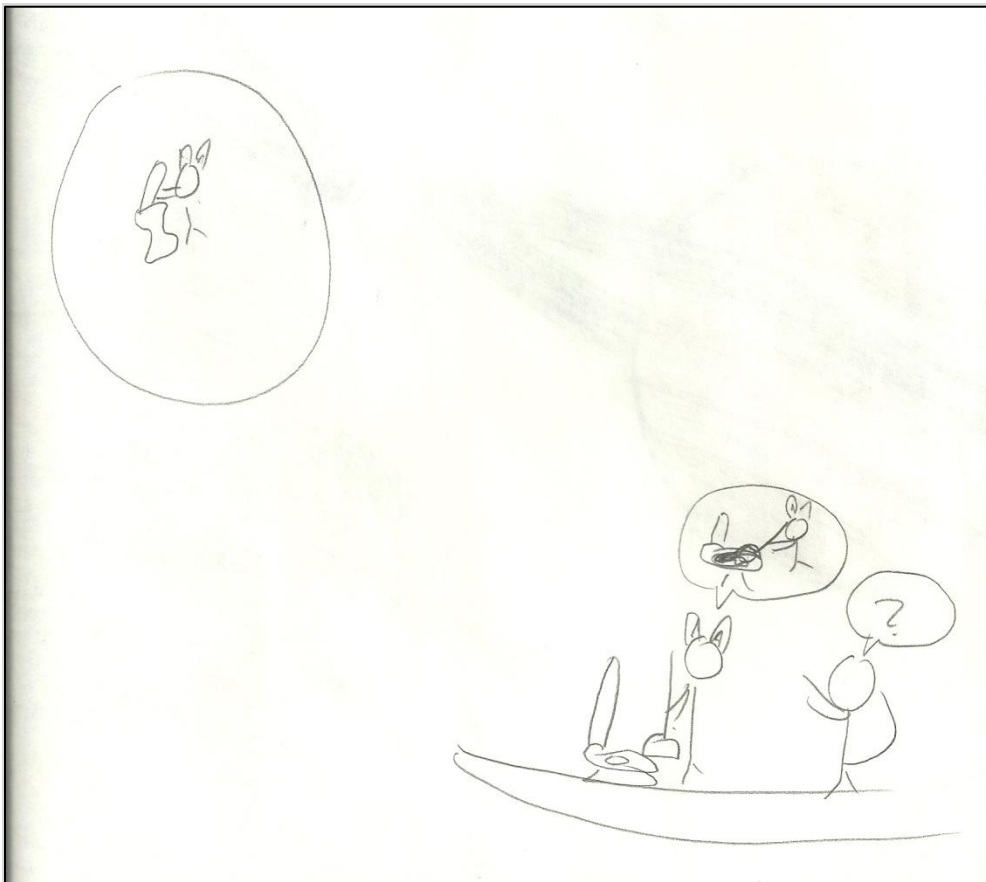
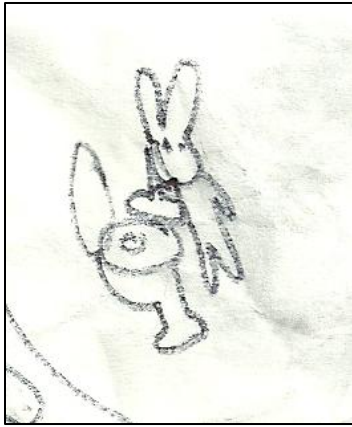


Figure 30. Part of Yoo-Bin's Drawing (upper left), Dong-Hoon's Drawing (under) in Response to *Why?: Universe* and Mashimaro Character²⁵⁰ (upper right)

²⁵⁰ <http://www.momschool.co.kr/internet/images/11.gif>

Issues of media exploitation of children

As presented earlier in this section (p. 170), EGNs are considered as good examples of OSMU (One Source Multi Use), which is a business model that maximizes added values by applying one content source to various fields and genres. Many scholars and business people think that EGNs efficiently benefit many people – the publishers make money by selling EGNs and by selling the EGNs’ content to other media creators; game developers, movie makers, and other corporations that adopt EGNs’ content to produce their own goods can reduce cost in developing the basic content; children can enjoy reading EGNs and other media formats that originate from EGNs; some children can even (supposedly) learn information. Moreover, by skillfully shifting from one medium to others that are based on the same EGN content, children become more familiar with media intertextuality.

However, there is a capitalistic system behind all these interactions that may not be necessarily to the children’s advantage. Although children may be active agents – as opposed to passive receptacles – in their reading and using various media, they are still subject to exploitation by powerful corporate interests. For example, a child who enjoyed reading an EGN may play a video game that is based on that particular EGN because she/he likes to explore various media formats (media inter-textuality) or because she/he is exploited by clever corporate marketing strategies that attract children advertised EGN characters and plots and thus lure children to purchase more products.

In addition, many EGN publishers emphasize the EGNs’ educational effectiveness, which can make parents believe that their children will learn information from reading EGNs. This may lead children to think that EGNs and other EGN-based media will satisfy their parents’ “education fever” and thus enable them to avoid parents’ excessive intervention on their leisure

activity; by reading EGNs and consuming other media that are expansions of EGNs' content, children can demonstrate to their parents that they are working on some kind of learning activity.

Children's EGN reading and consumption of other media formats are connected to corporate interests through profit and Korean parents' excessive obsession with child education. How do we tell the difference between what children really want and what is promoted by commercial interests through media saturation? Could children be attracted to EGNs and other media because the corporations want them to think that way? These issues need to be explored further.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter summarizes the research findings of this study and discusses their implications. The significant contribution this study has made to research children's EGN and media use is discussed and directions for future research are suggested.

Research Findings

Educational Graphic Novels have been the most popular reading materials for Korean children since 2000. This study attempted to investigate the diverse views on the EGN phenomenon and to analyze children's use of this medium. In order to analyze the reasons for and patterns of children's EGN use, the following research questions were addressed:

- (1) Are EGNs really educational and entertaining at the same time?
- (2) Is EGN reading regarded as "real" reading?
- (3) Can we evaluate children's reading of EGNs in terms of standards for traditional literacy?

In order to hear directly from children regarding their use of EGNs, I conducted in-depth focus group interviews with them. Observations on children's reading behaviors at a public school and public library, interviews with teachers and librarians, and content analysis on selected EGNs were also conducted and analyzed.

Education and Entertainment in EGNs

The children in my focus groups demonstrated that children read EGNs primarily for fun, not to learn information. Children acknowledged that EGNs are made up of two different parts – the fun part and the educational part. It was easy for them to pick out and enjoy only the fun parts of an EGN, while ignoring the information parts. The result from a quiz competition based on the content of *Tomorrow's King of Experiment I: Competition between Acidity and Base* verified children's selective EGN reading pattern: the children were good at answering questions about the details of humor, characters and plots, but did not do a good job in answering questions about scientific information from the book. Many children stated that they did not care for the educational elements and just skipped that kind of information when reading EGNs. Therefore, from the perspective of Louis Rosenblatt's transactional theory, most children's EGN reading was located at the extreme end of aesthetic reading. Except for a few, most children in my focus groups insisted that they did not learn new information from reading EGNs, because they had already learned the information from previous learning experiences or they thought acquiring information is more effectively done by reading conventional children's non-fiction books.

Although there was barely any gender difference in children's passion for EGN reading, some differences existed in how girls and boys responded to certain elements of the EGNs. The boys responded to violent illustrations in EGNs more than girls did. They enjoyed collecting and playing with trading cards, such as the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* trading cards, which is one of the diverse media formats that originated from EGNs' content sources. The girls responded more to the subject of romance and were attracted by a strong as well as smart and pretty female character. The girls' enthusiastic response to strong female characters implies that

there have not been enough female characters in EGNs upon which girls can reflect their attitudes and behaviors.

Many children indicated that their enthusiasm for EGNs comes from the humor in the books. The focus group children found fun from various sources while reading EGNs – violence, verbal humor, slapstick humor and toilet humor were their favorites. The children not only responded to humor in the books, but also created and shared those types of humor among themselves. As Cart says, “Laughter is therapeutic. It is healing ... If we hurt, we laugh. And laughing, we heal” (1995, pp. 1-2). Through reading EGNs and thus laughing out loud, Korean children may have been healing selves that were hurt by an oppressive study load that stems from Korean society’s obsession with education – “education fever.” This study has implications for Korean parents and educators: merely pushing children toward more learning and education will only cause more stress for them, which will eventually lead them to more EGN reading that focuses only on the entertaining elements.

EGNs and Reading

Children loved to read EGNs. Based on my observations of children’s reading at Timber Public Library and Crayon Elementary School, more than half of the children in the libraries were reading EGNs. Considering that EGNs comprised 4-5% of the total library collection in those libraries, EGNs were certainly very popular reading material for children. Despite EGN’s popularity among children, many teachers and librarians who worked with elementary school students had critical views on EGNs in general. They insisted that most EGNs’ illustrations are artistically of bad quality, the text is poorly written, and incorrect information often appears. Teachers indicated EGNs are trouble-makers at school because some children try to read EGNs

during class, which disrupts the learning experiences and ruins the overall atmosphere of the class. Some school librarians had experiences removing some EGNs from the school library collections due to the requests from parents or teachers. Even when there was no extreme pressure from parents or teachers, the librarians themselves considered weeding EGN collections.

Many teachers and librarians that I interviewed assumed that EGNs would make children lose interest in regular children's books. Although some of them believed that EGNs can be excellent material for "high-interest/low vocabulary reading" (as cited in Krashen, 2004, p.100) and will eventually guide children into more complex readings, they could not shed the fear that children will not dare to try reading other types of books. In spite of these worries, many children confirmed that they liked to read regular children's books in addition to EGNs: from the focus group interviews with children and observations at Timber Public Library and Crayon Elementary School, I could see that many children enjoyed reading regular children's books, whether or not they were ardent EGN readers. Although the majority of books for children's in-library use were EGNs, the books children checked out varied. Children checked out almost all genres that were in the library collection, including novels, picture books, non-fiction, etc.

Some teachers and librarians that I interviewed acknowledged that some EGNs contain educationally enriching content that will stimulate children's intellectual curiosity. Based on her experience assigning a *hanbok*²⁵¹ EGN for her classroom reading, Ms. Yoon indicated that some EGNs can be good supplementary materials for learning for children (personal communication, August 24, 2010).

There is a need for special criteria for EGNs. The librarians and teachers had their own criteria in selecting appropriate EGNs for children, such as the trustworthiness of the author and publisher, quality of humor, ratio of educational elements to entertaining – educational elements

²⁵¹ *Hanbok* is traditional Korean clothing.

should dominate – and quality of text. However, the criteria were all different. Mrs. Lee indicated that the lack of appropriate criteria for EGNs causes confusion for teachers and a school's general atmosphere regarding reading education (personal communication, August 9, 2010).

EGNs and Media Intertextuality

Media scholar Frank Zingrone said, “A one-medium user is the new illiterate” (2001, p. 237). Taking its cue from Zingrone's assertion, Korean children are the “literates” who can skillfully use diverse media content and formats. The focus group discussions with children indicated that Korean children's EGN reading is connected to all three kinds of media intertextuality as described by Drotner²⁵² (2000, as cited in Livingstone & Bovill, 2000, ch.3, p.5). They followed up their interests in a particular subject – e.g., science or history – by reading other EGNs with the same subject; this is intra-textuality. The children also naturally moved across diverse media formats with the same content source; this is inter-textuality. Taking *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, for example, the children got acquainted with the characters and plots through reading the EGN, and further developed their familiarity with the content source by watching the digital book, playing the Nintendo DS game, and checking the official website of *Magic Thousand Characters Text*. Finally, there was resonance between the content of most EGNs and Korean children's own lives, which is basically “learning information” through diverse experiences; this is trans-textuality. The children crossed media boundaries not only within the same format or the same content, but also across different formats and different contents. When asked to draw pictures of themselves traveling the universe based on the content of the *Why?: Universe* EGN, some focus group children created images that incorporated

²⁵² For more information on the three categories of intertextuality that Drotner described, see page 171.

elements from a traditional Korean folktale and characters from other popular cartoon series, with the background as the universe, in comics format. The results from this drawing activity echoes Buckingham's statement, "Children's media culture is rarely medium-specific: it crosses the boundaries between texts and between traditional media forms" (2007, p. 80).

Appropriate Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria Needed

As the EGN market has grown, many new EGNs continue to be published in the children's book market in Korea. Kim Gyo-Sub, manager of Young Kwang Bookstore, says when one EGN becomes popular among readers, plenty of other EGNs that emulate that particular EGN appear. Kim indicates that some of those copycat EGNs contain sensational content that focus on the commercial aspect rather than educational effect, which is their strategy to overtake the sales of the original EGNs (as cited in Yoon, 2008). On average, one volume of an EGN that succeed in being both educational and engaging will require five to six months from proposal to release, but in the case of some more derivative EGNs the whole process – planning, writing, illustrating, editing, publishing, releasing, etc. – is completed within one or two months (Choi, 2007). Children's book author Uhm Ye-Hyun indicates that in some history EGNs about ancient Korean history, "A vassal and another vassal use telephone as a communication method and they drive a car when entering the castle"²⁵³ (as cited in Choi, 2007). In fact, many EGNs are created by people who are non-experts on the particular subject. For example, a science EGN may not necessarily be written or illustrated by someone who majored in science. Although many publishers have experts – e.g., a science professor – supervise the contents, other publishers do not have the contents reviewed for accuracy by experts.

²⁵³ Clearly, there was no telephone or car in ancient Korea. Uhm Ye-Hyun is indicating how a roughly made EGN can distort history and deliver false information to children.

Many children's book experts argue that parents' role is important to avoid those coarsely created EGNs (Lee, J., 2007; Lee, J., 2008; Na, 2005; Song, 2006; Yoon, 2008). Some newspaper articles have suggested guidelines for parents to select appropriate EGNs, based on interviews with children's literature experts. The guidelines include (1) trustworthiness of the publisher, (2) the author's academic background on the given subject or the existence of an expert reviewer, (3) the structure and probability of the plot, (4) the illustration style – the drawing's quality and the use of color, (5) the completeness of the sentences (avoid text that is comprised only of onomatopoeia and mimetic words – e.g., ugh, buzz), and (6) the clarity of the explanation on the given subject²⁵⁴ (Kang Baek-Hyang²⁵⁵, as cited in Na, 2005; Lee Un-Jeong²⁵⁶, as cited in Lee, J., 2007). Park Sung-Sik, manager of Hansol Education Publication Team, insists EGNs that simply emulate the existing popular EGNs, EGNs with unknown authors, and EGNs that excessively emphasize educational effectiveness should be avoided (as cited in Song, 2006).

Although the guidelines presented above are worth considering, they are missing another important aspect of EGN – EGN's trans-media intertextuality. As mentioned before, the contents of many EGNs are produced in many different media formats. Children consume the various products that originate from one content source. *Magic Thousand Characters Text* is already a part of popular culture among children in Korea, just like *Harry Potter* and *Hello Kitty* are in the U.S. Although currently only a few EGN series, such as the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* series and the *Why?* series, are produced in OSMU system, more EGN series are expected to penetrate diverse areas of Korean children's media culture.

²⁵⁴ If the explanation is too difficult, children will ignore the educational element and focus only on the comics part (Kang Baek-Hyang, as cited in Na, 2005).

²⁵⁵ Kang Baek-Hyang is an elementary school teacher and children's literature critic.

²⁵⁶ Lee Un-Jeong is a researcher of Korean language education institutions.

Scholars emphasize the importance of popular culture in peer group relationships (Suess et al., 1998; Suoninen, 2001). According to Suess et al., children talk about the media content or develop media-related play when socializing with each other. For media-related play, characters and themes from popular media are often taken as resources. Particularly for boys, playing computer games can be a very social activity. The use of media and media content can strengthen peer relationships and a sense of group identity for children (Suess et al., 1998, p. 526; 529; 535). The fact that many EGNs are part of popular culture among children and play an important role in socialization among peer groups, should be taken into consideration when developing EGN evaluation criteria and selection guidelines: Factors such as the existence of other media formats based on the same content source, and the ways children can use EGNs and other media in terms of peer group socialization, should also be considered in evaluating EGNs. In her study about television and teenage literacy, Margaret Mackey asserted, “Understanding and valuing what students bring into the classroom in terms of contemporary literacies is an important prerequisite to engaging them in developing those literacies further” (2003a, p. 390). In like manner, evaluation criteria should include what children are doing with EGNs and other media that originated from the same content source in their daily lives. Establishing robust criteria that reflect children’s media culture will stimulate publishers and other media creators to develop higher-quality products that meet the standards of the evaluation criteria. This will eventually provide children with a more diverse and enriched media environment that will help them develop various media literacies.

Based on this study, I have a number of recommendations for evaluation criteria of EGNs. As the name “Educational Graphic Novels” suggests, EGNs are graphic novels that are

educational. That is, they should be “educational” and should satisfy the readers’ expectations of the “graphic novel” format, which is to be fun and engaging²⁵⁷.

To be educational, an EGN must contain accurate information on the given subject. In order to determine whether an EGN can be effective efferent reading material, we should consider the following factors: the author’s background on the given subject area; the existence of a supervisor (expert in the given subject area) in creating the EGN; good style and grammar; and the clarity of the information presented in the EGN – that is, whether the content is well delivered to the young readers of EGNs.

To satisfy readers’ expectations for both instruction and delight, an EGN should be aesthetically appealing. Readers should be able to find pleasure when reading EGNs. Therefore, the following factors should be considered: engaging plot; realistic and unstereotyped characters; gender balance, especially in the main characters; and the quality of the illustrations in terms of drawing style and color. Most importantly, there should be humor. Humor is the most essential element to engage young EGN readers.

Another factor to consider is the existence or possibility of other media formats that contain the same content as the EGNs. In some cases, a popular EGN series is later made into other media formats. In other cases, the content that is already popular through other media formats – e.g., an online video game or a TV drama – is later created into an EGN format. When one content source becomes a basis of OSMU or commercial transmedia supersystems, there are more possibilities for media exploitation by powerful corporate interests. Therefore, more careful attention should be given to those EGNs that are part of media intertextuality.

In short, the EGN selection criteria that I have presented here include three major aspects – to be informational, to be pleasurable, and potentially accessible in various formats while

²⁵⁷ Being fun and engaging is what most Korean comics readers expect from the comics (manhwa) format.

maintaining the quality of the narrative. EGNs should be able to provide authentic information to young readers, give them pleasure in reading, and provide them opportunities to be active and skillful users of various media. As this study has revealed, many EGNs satisfy only one aspect – to be engaging; the Korean children I studied demonstrated that they read EGNs for pleasure alone. More EGNs that meet the selection criteria that I provided should be published to supply high quality reading materials for children.

Significance of the Study

So far, the overall discussion on Educational Graphic Novels in Korea has been concentrated on these two questions: “Are EGNs good or bad for children?”, “Are EGNs useful to children’s learning?” Studies about EGNs have focused on analyzing the content of particular EGNs (Cho, 2007; Jin, 2007; Kang & Jeong, 2009; Noh, 2006; Sim, 2007); teachers’ reading guidance on EGN reading (Hwang, 2006; Im, 2009; Jin, 2007; Kim, 2007); or whether or not reading EGNs helps in supplementing the school curriculum (Kang & Jeong). Although some studies used the survey method to ask children’s opinions about EGNs, children’s voices have been mediated by the judgmental expectations of adult researchers. By conducting in-depth focus group interviews with children, this study enabled children, the actual readers of EGNs, to speak in their own voices regarding their use of and perspectives on EGNs.

According to prominent media scholar David Buckingham, two contrasting views on children and their media use exist in current society. On the one hand, there is a perspective that regards children as vulnerable and innocent beings who are easily affected by media manipulation: children are considered passive recipients who should be protected from harmful media. On the other hand, a more contemporary perspective that has emerged mainly around

media industries regards children as media-wise beings who are sophisticated, demanding, and hard to please. From this perspective, children are seen as active consumers who know what they want from media (Buckingham, 2000).

The findings of this study indicate that Korean children are media-wise consumers who know what they want from reading EGNs. Despite many adults' hope that EGN reading will enhance children's knowledge on a given subject, most children in my focus group discussions confirmed that they chose to ignore the educational elements in the EGNs. This contradicts many EGN publishers' beliefs and advertisements that children will naturally acquire information while enjoying the entertaining elements from reading in comics format. My focus group children often used the terms "EGN" and "general comic book" interchangeably and did not see much difference between the two genres. Min-Suh, one of the focus group children, said, "This kind of comics [meaning EGNs] are just to let kids have fun and laugh. So we just look at the fun part" (Group III, Week 2). Min-Suh and others' statements suggest that Korean children read EGNs to enjoy the entertaining elements and are likely to disregard the educational elements. According to Michel de Certeau, a scholar in social science, history, psychoanalysis, and philosophy, readers resist receiving information through the "legitimized ways of using"²⁵⁸ it. Rather, they try to seek and use information through "tactics" that are designed according to each individual's purpose of information use (as cited in Rothbauer, 2005). In the case of Korean children and their EGN reading, the children resisted obtaining educational information through reading EGNs – the purported legitimate way of using EGNs – but instead used their own tactics

²⁵⁸ According to Certeau, these "legitimized ways of using" information are what official institutions such as the military, education, business, and government want people to follow when practicing information. Certeau termed this notion as "strategies." Resistance to these "strategies" and intending to make one's own way of seeking information and consuming media are called "tactics" (as cited in Rothbauer, 2005).

to filter out educational elements and only enjoy the entertaining elements of EGNs to fulfill their own purpose, which is to have fun while reading EGNs.

Another important finding of this study is that children are learning the power of story through their EGN reading. As seen in Table 12, Results of the quiz competition based on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment: Competition between Acidity and Base* (pp. 127-129), my focus group children remembered most of the details of humor, characters and plots of the EGN. Margaret Meek says, "[S]trange as it may seem, the reading of stories makes skillful, powerful readers who come to understand not only the meaning but also the force of texts. It is a strong defence against being victimized by the reductive powers of so-called 'functional literacy' (1988, p. 40). By absorbing the story details of an EGN, children can have the advantage of knowledge beyond scientific facts, including narrative logic, predictive patterns, textual/graphic interaction, functional skill practice that supports emergent literacy, and the kind of confidence-building that series books reinforce for learners at a transitional stage. These will eventually benefit children to become more skillful readers who are capable of going on to the higher stage of education. Many adults wonder how much subject information children absorb from reading EGNs but do not care about how children enjoy the story of EGNs. However, by enjoying the story of EGNs, children can gain a different kind of knowledge – narrative power – that is equally, if not more, important than content information.

This study is significant because (1) it provided an opportunity for Korean children to speak in their own voices on the reading materials that are designed for them, and (2) it indicated that they are active and media-wise consumers (rather than passive recipients), who know what they want from media and can skillfully obtain information they want across diverse media

formats. In addition, this study (3) demonstrated that Korean children are learning from EGNs the power of story narrative, which will benefit them as they go through their education.

Future Research

The findings of this study provide the following possibilities for future research. The first area for further research is the relationship between children's age and learning effectiveness through EGN reading. Although most children in my focus group discussions confirmed that they focused only on the entertaining elements and did not care about the educational elements when reading EGNs, a few children – the youngest of the groups – insisted that EGN reading had helped them with acquiring information on the given subject. Mrs. Han also demonstrated her son's progress in learning Chinese characters while simultaneously enjoying reading the *Magic Thousand Characters Text* EGN. Before I started this study, my understanding was that the target readers of most EGNs are elementary school students, particularly third graders and up, because many EGNs used relatively small font sizes for text and contained information related to school curriculum. However, conducting this study revealed that perhaps many children start reading EGNs before they enter elementary school. It was particularly interesting to know that many children start reading the *Why?* series – the science EGN series that deals with complex scientific knowledge – at ages 5 or 6. Factors that should be considered for future study include: (1) the EGN titles that children claim to have been effective or not effective for their learning; (2) targeted age groups of those EGNs reported by the publishers; (3) children's previous reading experiences before starting to read EGNs; (4) children's previous learning experiences on the given subjects through other sources – e.g., private tutoring, school curriculum; (5) children's

literacy skills – textual and visual in particular – and their competitiveness at school; (6) the complexity of the text and information in EGNs; (7) other media formats.

The second area for future research involves socio-economic classes of children and their EGN reading. It is undeniable that EGNs are widely read among all children of all socio-economic classes. Interviews with teachers and librarians who worked in economically diverse neighborhoods confirmed that EGNs are the most wanted reading materials for children, regardless of their families' economic status. However, the interview with Mrs. Shin led me to think about the possible differences in children's EGN use between different socio-economic classes. Mrs. Shin worked at a public elementary school located in a poor neighborhood. The students were mostly from low-income families. Quite a few students lived in a single-parent household or lived only with grandparent(s). Because their parents or guardians were mostly at work, there was insufficient attention paid to children's education and reading. Moreover, the school library had a relatively smaller collection of books – including both regular children's books and EGNs – than other elementary schools with better economic circumstances (personal communication, August 19, 2010). The reading environment of children at Mrs. Shin's school was different from that of the focus group children of this study. The children in the focus groups were all from the upper middle class and had highly educated parents who were at leisure to attend to their children's education. In research on children's print environment in two different economic groups, Neuman and Celano found out that "children in middle-income neighborhoods were likely to be deluged with a wide variety of reading materials. However, children from poor neighborhoods would have to aggressively and persistently seek them out" (as cited in Krashen, 2004, p. 70). In addition to the parents' concerns for children's education and reading and the difference in print environment, the availability of other media formats, such as the ownership of

a computer or Nintendo DS, should be considered in analyzing the patterns of children's EGN reading in different socio-economic classes because the content of EGNs is provided and consumed in various media formats.

The third area for future research is the expansion on discussions of EGNs and media intertextuality. According to Margaret Mackey, a prominent youth media and literacy scholar, children "do not necessarily perceive print as the primary source of cultural meaning, whatever the adults in their lives believe" (2003b, p. 403). As described in Chapter 4, EGNs and Media Intertextuality, Korean children consume the same content from EGNs and a variety of other media. The three selected EGNs – *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, *Why?: Universe*, and *Tomorrow's King of Experiment* – that were used in this study are all consumed in this way: they started with an EGN and later developed other media formats. *Maple Story* is a popular text that has been consumed by Korean children through various media formats including EGNs, an online video game, trading card game, music (digital single), and other children's merchandise. What is unique about the *Maple Story* EGN series compared to the three EGN series that were discussed in this study is that *Maple Story* was started as an online video game for children by a game developing company, Nexon Korea. Although there are controversies around the *Maple Story* EGNs' educational effectiveness, some children seem to view them as no different from other EGNs. For example, Jee-Won, one of the girls in my focus groups, said that she learned math through reading *Comic Maple Story: Math Thief* (Group III, Week 2). I am curious how different or similar are children's conceptions of two different content sources – one that was derived from an EGN series and the other that was derived from an online game. By comparing the patterns of children's consumption of diverse media formats of *Maple Story* and *Magic Thousand Characters Text*, two of the most popular content sources among Korean children, I

will be able to see if Mackey's assertion applies to the discussions of EGNs in Korea, where education holds a serious and special cultural meaning to everyone in the society.

Closing Remarks

Buckingham says, "Kids know what they want from the media – and it is the job of adults to provide them with this, rather than falling back on their own beliefs about what is good for them" (Buckingham, 2000, p. 96). Buckingham's remark suggests both a philosophy and action step for Korean educators, parents, and publishers. As this study demonstrated, Korean children are media-wise consumers who can skillfully use various media to obtain particular information and reading experiences. Although children may be active agents in their reading and using various media, they are still subject to exploitation by powerful corporate interests.

As long as we live in a modern society, it is not possible to completely escape from the commercial and cultural manipulation of children's media. Robust evaluation criteria for EGNs by children's literature and reading specialists who have no vested business interests in the publishing enterprise may be one way to help children choose and enjoy the EGNs and EGN-based media that they really want. By providing an honest and varied media environment, we can assist our children to enhance their own ability to use media wisely and acquire necessary information from diverse media forms. Let children be entertained, let children learn – in the way that they want. Adults must understand this and trust children to know what they want.

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF EGNs CONSIDERED DURING SELECTION PROCESS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

I. 40 Bestselling EGNs in 2007 and 2008 at Kyobo Bookstore [2007]

Rank	Title	Author	Publisher
1	Magic Thousand Characters Text 13	Cereal	Book21 Owlbook
2	Maple Story (Offline RPG 20)	Song Do-Soo	SMG
3	21th Century Far Countries, Near Countries 9: Korea	Rhie Won-Bok	Gimmyyoung
4	Finding Treasure in the U.K.	Komdolee CO	I-Seum
5	Karo Sero World History 3: Middle East Countries	Rhie Won-Bok	Gimmyyoung
6	Math Thief 3 (Comic Maple Story)	Song Do-Soo	SMG
7	Surviving in the Universe 1: Astronaut Practice	Comic Com	I-Seum
8	Sponge 1: Shine, Star of Knowledge	KBS Sponge Production Team	Hongjin P&M
9	Why?: Feces	Huh Soon-Bong	YeaRimDang
10	Escape from Crisis Number One 4	EduComic	Baleunmirae
11	Surviving in Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor 2	Comic Com	I-Seum Comics
12	Magic Thousand Characters Text Old Idioms and Phrases 1	Kim Joo-Hee	Owlbook
13	Manhwa English Textbook Vocabulary 1	Seok Dong-Yeon	Schola
14	Magic Fighter Ryukendo 1	Kyelim dot com Editing Team	Kyelim
15	Gram Gram English Grammar Long Road Corps	Jang Young-Jun	SaPyung
16	Manhwa Korean Textbook 1	Koh Heung-Jun	Schola
17	Run for Your Dream 1	Park Ji-Sung	Random House Korea
18	Comic Ghost Spirit	Oh Myung-Kang	Ever M&B
19	Fantasy Math Competition	Grimnamu	Minseogak
20	Maeumyi	Shin Dong-Ik	Hongjin P&M

[2008]

Rank	Title	Author	Publisher
1	Magic Thousand Characters Text 16	Cereal	Owlbook
2	Maple Story (Offline RPG 26)	Song Do-Soo	SMG
3	Why?: Brain	Nam Chun-Ja	YeaRimDang
4	Finding Treasure in Thailand	Komdolee CO	I-Seum
5	Surviving in the Pyramid 2	Comic Com	I-Seum Comics
6	Finding Treasure in the Netherlands	Komdolee CO	I-Seum
7	Surviving in the Universe 3	Comic Com	I-Seum
8	Jin Gu's Magic World Adventure Seven Wizards	Fujiko F Fujio	Daewon Kids
9	Why?: Food and Nutrition	Jo Young-Sun	YeaRimDang
10	Finding Treasure in Mexico	Komdolee CO	I-Seum
11	Why?: Light and Sound	Jo Young-Sun	YeaRimDang
12	Escape from Crisis Number One 10	EduComic	Baleunmirae
13	Why?: The Reptiles and Amphibia	Papyrus	YeaRimDang
14	Why?: Information and Communication	Jo Young-Sun	YeaRimDang
15	Math Thief 5	Song Do-Soo	SMG
16	Taegeuk Thousand Characters Text 1	Editing Team	Pulbit Media
17	Why?: First-Aid Treatment	Papyrus	YeaRimDang
18	Why?: Future Science	Jo Young-Sun	YeaRimDang
19	Why?: Experiment and Observation	Chun Jae-Woon	YeaRimDang
20	Why?: Heredity and Bloodtype	Chun Jae-Woon	YeaRimDang

II. 10 most sold EGNs in 2007 and 2008 at Kyobo Bookstore (based on the list above)

- Magic Thousand Characters Text series (Owlbook)
- Why? series (YeaRimDang)
- Surviving series (I-Seum)
- Finding Treasure series (I-Seum)
- Maple Story series (SMG)
- Far Countries, Near Countries (Gimmyoung)
- Karo Sero World History (Gimmyoung)
- Math Thief (SMG)

- Sponge (Hongjin P&M)
- Jin Gu's Magic World Adventure Seven Wizards (Daewon Kids)

**APPENDIX B: PLOT OF *THE TAEGEUK (THE YIN AND YANG) THOUSAND
CHARACTERS TEXT***

A long time ago, everything in the world was born from the two opposing sides – the Yin and the Yang. The supernatural world and the human world existed in each different dimension. In the supernatural world, the tiger tribe and the dragon tribe created The Taegeuk Thousand Characters Text that contains principles of balancing the system of the universe. The tiger tribe took care of one half of The Taegeuk Thousand Characters Text and the dragon tribe took care of the other half. Together they ruled the supernatural world in peace. One day, a vicious party rebelled in the dragon tribe and Diga, the head of the vicious party, becomes the dragon king. The dragon king attacked the tiger tribe. He wanted to get the other half of The Taegeuk Thousand Characters Text in order to conquer the entire world. The tiger king, now facing a crisis, destroyed the monument that contained half of The Taegeuk Thousand Characters Text, to keep it from the dragon king's possession. The Taegeuk Thousand Characters Text monument of the tiger tribe was broken into pieces and the fragments were dispersed in the human world. Survivors of the tiger tribe also escaped to the human world. Tiger tribe's survivors adapted themselves to human life but secretly searched for the dispersed the Thousand Characters Text fragments. Later, the dragon tribe's army also infiltrated the human world. Now another war between the tiger tribe and the dragon tribe surrounding the secret of The Taegeuk Thousand Characters Text began in the human world. (Korean Broadcasting System et al., n.d.)

APPENDIX C: RECRUITING MESSAGE FOR FOCUS GROUPS (BERKELEY) – ENGLISH

Hello.

My name is Yeo Joo Lim.

I am a doctoral student in Graduate School of Library and Information Science at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

I am conducting a research for my doctoral dissertation, which includes group discussions with children about Educational Graphic Novels.

As many of you already know, EGN became extraordinarily popular among children in Korea recently.

My research explores the sudden popularity of EGN, particularly the use and meaning of EGN to the actual readers – children themselves.

I plan group discussion sessions with six Korean children ages 7 to 11 years olds who have been living in the U.S. for less than a year.

The group will meet 4 times – once every week – at the University Village Community Center of UC Berkley.

Each session will be about an hour long.

The activity in the group discussion will be as follow:

- Week 1: Free conversation about EGN
- Week 2: Discussion on *Magic Thousand Character*
- Week 3: Discussion on *Why?*
- Week 4: Discussion on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Before sessions in Week 2, 3, and 4, I will lend one book to each child. Children will read the book until the next week and we will talk about that book altogether. For example, at the end of Week 1 session, all children will be given *Magic Thousand Character* vol.1 and they will participate in a discussion about that particular title at Week 2 session.

When all four sessions are completed, children will be given the book they have read for this research as a present.

Exact meeting times will be decided considering the participants' preferences.

If you are interested, please contact:

Yeo Joo Lim

ylim20@illinois.edu

217-419-5226

217-419-6067

APPENDIX D: RECRUITING MESSAGE FOR FOCUS GROUPS (BERKELEY) - KOREAN

안녕하세요.

저는 일리노이 주립대학교 (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) 문헌정보학과 박사과정에 재학중인 임여주라고 합니다.

저는 최근 십년간 한국에서 폭발적인 인기를 끌고 있는 학습만화에 대한 연구를 하고 있는데요, 특히 학습만화의 주 독자층인 어린이들이 학습만화를 어떻게 활용하며 학습만화라는 장르에 대해 어떻게 생각하는지에 관심을 두고 있습니다.

그래서, 그룹토론이라는 형태로 어린이들의 의견을 직접 들어보고자 합니다.

모집 대상은 만 7 세에서 11 세 (한국의 초등학교 2 학년에서 6 학년)로, 미국에 온지 1 년 미만인 아이들입니다.

그룹 인원은 총 여섯 명으로 계획하고 있습니다.

그룹은 일주일에 한 번 1 시간씩 총 4 회 만나게 되며, 모임 장소는 University Village 안의 커뮤니티 센터입니다.

그룹토론의 주제는 다음과 같습니다:

- 첫째주: 학습만화에 대해 자유로운 생각 말하기
- 둘째주: ‘마법천자문’에 대한 토론
- 셋째주: ‘Why?’에 대한 토론
- 넷째주: ‘내일은 실험왕’에 대한 토론

첫 주를 제외한 각 모임의 일주일 전에 아이들에게 책을 한 권씩 빌려줄 것입니다.

아이들은 일주일동안 그 책을 읽고 다음 토론시간에 그 책에 대하여 토론하게 됩니다.

예를 들면, 첫 주의 토론이 끝나고 집에 가기 전에 아이들은 ‘마법천자문 1 권’을 받게 되는데, 그 책은 둘째 주 토론의 주제가 됩니다.

4 주의 그룹토론이 모두 끝나면 그동안 읽었던 학습만화책들은 모두 아이들에게 선물로 주어집니다.

정확한 만남 시간은 그룹 인원이 결정된 후에 각 참가자들의 스케줄을 고려해 정해질
것입니다.

관심있으신 분은 아래로 연락주시기 바랍니다.

많은 참여 부탁드립니다.

임여주

ylim20@illinois.edu

217-419-5226

217-419-6067

APPENDIX E: RECRUITING MESSAGE FOR FOCUS GROUPS (WALNUT CREEK) - ENGLISH

Hello.

My name is Yeo Joo Lim.

I am a doctoral student in Graduate School of Library and Information Science at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

I am conducting a research for my doctoral dissertation, which includes group discussions with children about Educational Graphic Novels.

As many of you already know, EGN became extraordinarily popular among children in Korea recently.

My research explores the sudden popularity of EGN, particularly the use and meaning of EGN to the actual readers – children themselves.

I plan group discussion sessions with six Korean children ages 7 to 11 years olds who have been living in the U.S. for less than a year.

The group will meet 4 times – once every week – at the Lafayette Library.

Each session will be about an hour long.

The activity in the group discussion will be as follow:

- Week 1: Free conversation about EGN
- Week 2: Discussion on *Magic Thousand Character*
- Week 3: Discussion on *Why?*
- Week 4: Discussion on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Before sessions in Week 2, 3, and 4, I will lend one book to each child. Children will read the book until the next week and we will talk about that book altogether. For example, at the end of Week 1 session, all children will be given *Magic Thousand Character* vol.1 and they will participate in a discussion about that particular title at Week 2 session.

When all four sessions are completed, children will be given the book they have read for this research as a present.

Exact meeting times will be decided considering the participants' preferences.

If you are interested, please contact:

Yeo Joo Lim

ylim20@illinois.edu

217-419-5226

217-419-6067

APPENDIX F: RECRUITING MESSAGE FOR FOCUS GROUPS (WALNUT CREEK) – KOREAN

안녕하세요.

저는 일리노이 주립대학교 (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) 문헌정보학과 박사과정에 재학중인 임여주라고 합니다.

저는 최근 십년간 한국에서 폭발적인 인기를 끌고 있는 학습만화에 대한 연구를 하고 있는데요, 특히 학습만화의 주 독자층인 어린이들이 학습만화를 어떻게 활용하며 학습만화라는 장르에 대해 어떻게 생각하는지에 관심을 두고 있습니다.

그래서, 그룹토론이라는 형태로 어린이들의 의견을 직접 들어보고자 합니다.

모집 대상은 만 7 세에서 11 세 (한국의 초등학교 2 학년에서 6 학년)로, 미국에 온지 1 년 미만인 아이들입니다.

그룹 인원은 총 여섯 명으로 계획하고 있습니다.

그룹은 일주일에 한 번 1 시간씩 총 4 회 만나게 되며, 모임 장소는 Lafayette Library 입니다.

그룹토론의 주제는 다음과 같습니다:

- 첫째주: 학습만화에 대해 자유로운 생각 말하기
- 둘째주: ‘마법천자문’에 대한 토론
- 셋째주: ‘Why?’에 대한 토론
- 넷째주: ‘내일은 실험왕’에 대한 토론

첫 주를 제외한 각 모임의 일주일 전에 아이들에게 책을 한 권씩 빌려줄 것입니다.

아이들은 일주일동안 그 책을 읽고 다음 토론시간에 그 책에 대하여 토론하게 됩니다.

예를 들면, 첫 주의 토론이 끝나고 집에 가기 전에 아이들은 ‘마법천자문 1 권’을 받게 되는데, 그 책은 둘째 주 토론의 주제가 됩니다.

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정확한 만남 시간은 그룹 인원이 결정된 후에 각 참가자들의 스케줄을 고려해 정해질
것입니다.

관심있으신 분은 아래로 연락주시기 바랍니다.

많은 참여 부탁드립니다.

임여주

ylim20@illinois.edu

217-419-5226

217-419-6067

APPENDIX G: PARENT PERMISSION LETTER (BERKELEY) - ENGLISH

Date

Dear Parent:

We are Yeo-Joo Lim and Christine A. Jenkins from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois. We would like to include your child, along with about 5 other Korean children, in a research project on Educational Graphic Novels in Korean Children's Lives. If your child takes part in this project, once a week for four weeks, 1 hour per day of your child's after school free time will be spent on the group discussions about Educational Graphic Novels.

As many of you already know, Educational Graphic Novels became extraordinarily popular among children in Korea recently. This research project explores the sudden popularity of EGN, particularly the use and meaning of EGN to the actual readers – children themselves. We plan group discussion sessions with five Korean children ages 7 to 11 years olds who have been living in the U.S. for less than a year. The group will meet at the University Village Community Center of UC Berkley. Each session will be about an hour long.

The activity in the group discussion will be as follow:

- Week 1: Free conversation about EGN
- Week 2: Discussion on *Magic Thousand Character*
- Week 3: Discussion on *Why?*
- Week 4: Discussion on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Before sessions in Week 2, 3, and 4, I will lend one book to each child. Children will read the book until the next week and we will talk about that book altogether. For example, at the end of Week 1 session, all children will be given *Magic Thousand Character* vol.1 and they will participate in a discussion about that particular title at Week 2 session.

When all four sessions are completed, children will be given the book they have read for this research as a present. (The books will be presented only when the children complete all four sessions.)

If you would like to examine books that will be used in the group discussions before you give consent, I would be happy to show them to you.

Exact meeting times will be decided considering the participants' preferences.

The participation of this study is voluntary and children may discontinue at anytime without any penalty.

The researchers want to provide an environment for group discussion in which children can express their candid thoughts. Therefore, you will not be in the room while discussions are taking place and will not be able to view transcripts of these discussions.

There are no physical risks to participants in this study. However, participants may feel temporary emotional distress if they discuss uncomfortable experiences or conflicts with other people – e.g., parents or teachers – regarding their Educational Graphic Novels reading behavior. The researcher will ask the children to respect the privacy of the discussion session, but she cannot guarantee that one or more children won't relate 'who said what' after the session is over. In order to minimize the stated risks, prior to every session the researcher will remind children that they may refuse to answer to any questions that they would be uncomfortable answering.

Your child's participation in this project is completely voluntary. In addition to your permission, your child will also be asked if he or she would like to take part in this project. Only those children who have parental permission and who want to participate will do so, and any child may stop taking part at any time. You are free to withdraw your permission for your child's participation at any time and for any reason without penalty.

The discussion sessions will be audio recorded and the recorded files will be kept for two years. You must allow the sessions to be audio recorded for your child to participate. The information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. Any sharing or publication of the research results will not identify any of the participants by name.

In the space at the bottom of this letter, please indicate whether you do or do not want your child to participate in this project and return this note to Yeo-Joo Lim before the first group discussion session starts. Please keep the second copy of this form for your records.

We look forward to working with your child. We think that our research will be enjoyable for the children who participate. This research will give children opportunity to voice their opinions regarding their experiences on Educational Graphic Novels: This is especially important because current academic literature does not reflect children's perspectives on Educational Graphic Novels, even though children are the actual readers of them. In addition, this research will benefit the field of children's literature and library services in Korea in that it will offer thorough investigation on Educational Graphic Novels, which stand out as a phenomenon in recent Korean society. It will also benefit the U.S. children's literature and library services field, which are gradually recognizing graphic novels as a medium worth researching academically.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact us using the information below. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in research involving human subjects, please feel free to contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at 217.333.2670 or irb@illinois.edu. You are welcome to call these numbers collect if you identify yourself as a research participant.

Please keep the attached copy of this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Yeo-Joo Lim
217.419.5226
[ylim20@illinois.edu](mailto:yylim20@illinois.edu)

Christine A. Jenkins
217.244.7452
[cajenkin@illinois.edu](mailto:cjenkin@illinois.edu)

I *do* / *do not* (circle one) give permission for my child _____ (name of child) to participate in the research project described above.

(Print) Parent's name

Parent's signature

Date

I *do* / *do not* (circle one) give permission for my child _____ (name of child)'s conversation to be audio-recorded in the research project described above.

(Print) Parent's name

Parent's signature

Date

APPENDIX H: PARENT PERMISSION LETTER (BERKELEY) - KOREAN

날짜

학부모님께:

저희는 일리노이 주립 대학교 (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) 문헌정보학과 박사과정에 재학중인 임여주와 지도교수인 크리스틴 켄킨스입니다. 제 박사 논문의 주제인 ‘한국 어린이들의 학습만화 읽기’ 연구의 일환으로 귀 자녀를 포함한 총 다섯 명의 한국 어린이들과 함께 그룹 토론을 하고자 합니다. 참여가 결정되면, 어린이들은 일주일에 한 번씩, 총 네 번 모여서 저와 함께 학습만화에 대한 의견을 나누게 됩니다. 각 세션은 1 시간 가량 소요될 예정입니다.

많은 분들이 이미 아시다시피, 학습만화는 최근 한국에서 폭발적인 인기를 누리고 있습니다. 이 연구는 학습만화의 인기 요인을 분석하고, 특히 학습만화의 주 독자층인 어린이들에게 학습만화가 어떤 의미인지를 중점적으로 알아보려는 목적을 갖고 있습니다. 참여 대상은 미국에서 거주한지 1년 미만이 되는 만 7세에서 11세까지 (한국의 초등학교 2학년에서 6학년)의 한국 어린이들입니다. 그룹 토론이 열리는 장소는 University Village 안에 있는 Community Center입니다.

각 세션에서는 다음과 같은 주제를 다루게 됩니다:

- 첫째주: 학습만화에 대해 자유로운 생각 말하기
- 둘째주: ‘마법천자문’에 대한 토론
- 셋째주: ‘Why?’에 대한 토론
- 넷째주: ‘내일은 실험왕’에 대한 토론

첫 주를 제외한 각 모임의 일주일 전에 아이들에게 책을 한 권씩 빌려줄 것입니다. 아이들은 일주일동안 그 책을 읽고 다음 토론시간에 그 책에 대하여 토론하게 됩니다. 예를 들면, 첫 주의 토론이 끝나고 집에 가기 전에 아이들은 ‘마법천자문 1권’을 받게 되는데, 그 책은 둘째 주 토론의 주제가 됩니다.

4주의 그룹토론이 모두 끝나면 그동안 읽었던 학습만화책들은 모두 아이들에게 선물로 주어집니다. (4주의 토론에 모두 참여한 아이들에게만 책 선물이 주어집니다.)

정확한 만남 시간은 그룹 인원이 결정된 후에 각 참가자들의 스케줄을 고려해 정해질 것입니다. 어린이들의 자유 의지에 의해 연구에 참여할지를 결정하실 수 있으며, 연구 기간 도중 어느 때에나 별금 등의 불이익 없이 참여를 그만둘 수 있습니다.

그룹토론에 학부모님께서도 함께 하실 수 없으며 자녀가 어떤 말을 했는지 알기 위해 녹음된 내용을 확인하실 수 없습니다. 이는 어린이들이 자유로운 분위기에서 솔직한 의견을 말할 수 있게 하기 위함입니다.

이 연구에 참여함으로써 얻게 되는 신체적 위험은 없습니다. 그러나 토론 중 학습만화에 관련된 좋지 않은 경험이나 다른 사람과의 갈등을 이야기할 때에 일시적으로 기분이 나빠질 수도 있습니다. 제가 어린이들에게 토론세션 중 개인의 프라이버시를 존중해달라고 부탁을 하겠지만, 세션이 끝난 후 ‘누가 어떤 말을 했는지’에 대하여 아이들끼리 이야기할 가능성은 여전히 배제할 수 없습니다. 이러한 상황을 방지하기 위해서 매 세션 시작 전에 제가 아이들에게 ‘대답하기 불편하면 하지 않아도 된다’는 것을 상기시키도록 하겠습니다.

귀 자녀가 이 연구에 참여하는 것은 전적으로 자유의지에 의한 것입니다. 학부모님의 동의 외에도, 어린이들은 이 연구에 참여하고 싶은지 아닌지 직접 질문을 받게 됩니다. 부모님의 동의가 있고, 스스로도 참여할 의사가 있는 어린이들만이 이 연구에 참여하게 되며, 언제든지 참여를 그만둘 수 있습니다. 학부모님께서도 언제든지 불이익 없이 자녀의 연구 참여에 대한 동의를 취하하실 수 있습니다.

각 토론 세션은 녹음이 될 것이며 그 파일은 2년간 보관될 것입니다. 자녀의 연구 참여를 원하시는 학부모님께서도 녹음을 허락해 주셔야 합니다. 이 연구에서 얻은 자료는 철저히 보안이 유지될 것입니다. 이 자료를 바탕으로 출판되는 어떤 출판물에도 참가 어린이들의 이름을 밝히지 않을 것입니다.

이 동의서 하단에 자녀의 연구 참여 허락 여부를 기입하신 후 첫 그룹토론 세션이 시작하기 전까지 저(임여주)에게 돌려주시면 됩니다. 나머지 문서 한 부는 학부모님께 드리는 것입니다.

귀 자녀와 함께 연구를 할 수 있기를 바랍니다. 귀 자녀에게도 이 연구 참여가 즐거운 경험이 될 것이라고 생각합니다. 이 연구는 어린이들에게 학습만화에 대한 의견을 말할 수 있는 기회를 주는데, 이것은 현재 학습만화에 대한 연구들이 주 독자층인 어린이들의 목소리를 거의 반영하고

있지 않다는 점에서 특히 더 중요하다고 생각합니다. 이 연구는 현재 한국에서 특이한 현상으로 주목 받고 있는 학습만화 열풍을 자세히 다룸으로써 한국의 어린이문학과 어린이 도서관서비스의 발전에 도움이 될 것입니다. 또한 점점 더 많은 학자들이 만화라는 장르를 학문적인 측면에서 바라보고 있는 미국의 어린이문학과 어린이 도서관 분야에도 기여를 할 것입니다.

이 연구에 대해 질문사항이 있으시면 아래 연락처로 저 또는 저의 지도교수님께 연락해주시기 바랍니다. 인간관련 연구 (research involving human subject)의 참여자로서 갖는 권리에 대해 궁금하신 것이 있다면 일리노이 주립대학교 IRB 오피스 (University of Illinois Institutional Review Board Office)로 연락해 주십시오: 217.333.2670 / irb@illinois.edu. 전화를 하실 때는 자신을 연구 참여자라고 밝히시면 됩니다.

나머지 문서 한 부는 갖고 계십시오.
감사합니다.

임여주
217.419.5226
ylin20@illinois.edu

Christine A. Jenkins
217.244.7452
cajenkin@illinois.edu

나는 나의 자녀 _____ (자녀의 이름) 가 위에 언급된 연구에 참여하는 것을
허락합니다 / 허락하지 않습니다(둘 중 하나를 선택해주세요).

부모님의 성함 (정자로 기입해 주세요)

부모님의 서명

날짜

나는 위에 언급된 연구에서 나의 자녀 _____ (자녀의 이름) 의 대화가 녹음되는
것을 *허락합니다 / 허락하지 않습니다*(둘 중 하나를 선택해주세요).

부모님의 성함 (정자로 기입해 주세요)

부모님의 서명

날짜

APPENDIX I: PARENT PERMISSION LETTER (WALNUT CREEK) - ENGLISH

Date

Dear Parent:

We are Yeo-Joo Lim and Christine A. Jenkins from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois. We would like to include your child, along with about 5 other Korean children, in a research project on Educational Graphic Novels in Korean Children's Lives. If your child takes part in this project, once a week for four weeks, 1 hour per day of your child's after school free time will be spent on the group discussions about Educational Graphic Novels.

As many of you already know, Educational Graphic Novels became extraordinarily popular among children in Korea recently. This research project explores the sudden popularity of EGN, particularly the use and meaning of EGN to the actual readers – children themselves. We plan group discussion sessions with five Korean children ages 7 to 11 years olds who have been living in the U.S. for less than a year. The group will meet at the Lafayette Public Library. Each session will be about an hour long.

The activity in the group discussion will be as follow:

- Week 1: Free conversation about EGN
- Week 2: Discussion on *Magic Thousand Character*
- Week 3: Discussion on *Why?*
- Week 4: Discussion on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Before sessions in Week 2, 3, and 4, I will lend one book to each child. Children will read the book until the next week and we will talk about that book altogether. For example, at the end of Week 1 session, all children will be given *Magic Thousand Character* vol.1 and they will participate in a discussion about that particular title at Week 2 session.

When all four sessions are completed, children will be given the book they have read for this research as a present. (The books will be presented only when the children complete all four sessions.)

If you would like to examine books that will be used in the group discussions before you give consent, I would be happy to show them to you.

Exact meeting times will be decided considering the participants' preferences.

The participation of this study is voluntary and children may discontinue at anytime without any penalty.

The researchers want to provide an environment for group discussion in which children can express their candid thoughts. Therefore, you will not be in the room while discussions are taking place and will not be able to view transcripts of these discussions.

There are no physical risks to participants in this study. However, participants may feel temporary emotional distress if they discuss uncomfortable experiences or conflicts with other people – e.g., parents or teachers – regarding their Educational Graphic Novels reading behavior. The researcher will ask the children to respect the privacy of the discussion session, but she cannot guarantee that one or more children won't relate 'who said what' after the session is over. In order to minimize the stated risks, prior to every session the researcher will remind children that they may refuse to answer to any questions that they would be uncomfortable answering.

Your child's participation in this project is completely voluntary. In addition to your permission, your child will also be asked if he or she would like to take part in this project. Only those children who have parental permission and who want to participate will do so, and any child may stop taking part at any time. You are free to withdraw your permission for your child's participation at any time and for any reason without penalty.

The discussion sessions will be audio recorded and the recorded files will be kept for two years. You must allow the sessions to be audio recorded for your child to participate. The information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. Any sharing or publication of the research results will not identify any of the participants by name.

In the space at the bottom of this letter, please indicate whether you do or do not want your child to participate in this project and return this note to Yeo-Joo Lim before the first group discussion session starts. Please keep the second copy of this form for your records.

We look forward to working with your child. We think that our research will be enjoyable for the children who participate. This research will give children opportunity to voice their opinions regarding their experiences on Educational Graphic Novels: This is especially important because current academic literature does not reflect children's perspectives on Educational Graphic Novels, even though children are the actual readers of them. In addition, this research will benefit the field of children's literature and library services in Korea in that it will offer thorough investigation on Educational Graphic Novels, which stand out as a phenomenon in recent Korean society. It will also benefit the U.S. children's literature and library services field, which are gradually recognizing graphic novels as a medium worth researching academically.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact us using the information below. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in research involving human subjects, please feel free to contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at 217.333.2670 or irb@illinois.edu. You are welcome to call these numbers collect if you identify yourself as a research participant.

Please keep the attached copy of this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Yeo-Joo Lim
217.419.5226
[ylim20@illinois.edu](mailto:yjim20@illinois.edu)

Christine A. Jenkins
217.244.7452
[cajenkin@illinois.edu](mailto:cjenkin@illinois.edu)

I *do* / *do not* (circle one) give permission for my child _____ (name of child) to participate in the research project described above.

(Print) Parent's name

Parent's signature

Date

I *do* / *do not* (circle one) give permission for my child _____ (name of child)'s conversation to be audio-recorded in the research project described above.

(Print) Parent's name

Parent's signature

Date

APPENDIX J: PARENT PERMISSION LETTER (WALNUT CREEK) - KOREAN

날짜

학부모님께:

저희는 일리노이 주립 대학교 (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) 문헌정보학과 박사과정에 재학중인 임여주와 지도교수인 크리스틴 켄킨스입니다. 제 박사 논문의 주제인 ‘한국 어린이들의 학습만화 읽기’ 연구의 일환으로 귀 자녀를 포함한 총 다섯 명의 한국 어린이들과 함께 그룹 토론을 하고자 합니다. 참여가 결정되면, 어린이들은 일주일에 한 번씩, 총 네 번 모여서 저와 함께 학습만화에 대한 의견을 나누게 됩니다. 각 세션은 1 시간 가량 소요될 예정입니다.

많은 분들이 이미 아시다시피, 학습만화는 최근 한국에서 폭발적인 인기를 누리고 있습니다. 이 연구는 학습만화의 인기 요인을 분석하고, 특히 학습만화의 주 독자층인 어린이들에게 학습만화가 어떤 의미인지를 중점적으로 알아보려는 목적을 갖고 있습니다. 참여 대상은 미국에서 거주한지 1년 미만이 되는 만 7세에서 11세까지 (한국의 초등학교 2학년에서 6학년)의 한국 어린이들입니다. 그룹 토론이 열리는 장소는 Lafayette Public Library 입니다.

각 세션에서는 다음과 같은 주제를 다루게 됩니다:

- 첫째주: 학습만화에 대해 자유로운 생각 말하기
- 둘째주: ‘마법천자문’에 대한 토론
- 셋째주: ‘Why?’에 대한 토론
- 넷째주: ‘내일은 실험왕’에 대한 토론

첫 주를 제외한 각 모임의 일주일 전에 아이들에게 책을 한 권씩 빌려줄 것입니다. 아이들은 일주일동안 그 책을 읽고 다음 토론시간에 그 책에 대하여 토론하게 됩니다. 예를 들면, 첫 주의 토론이 끝나고 집에 가기 전에 아이들은 ‘마법천자문 1권’을 받게 되는데, 그 책은 둘째 주 토론의 주제가 됩니다.

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정확한 만남 시간은 그룹 인원이 결정된 후에 각 참가자들의 스케줄을 고려해 정해질 것입니다.

어린이들의 자유 의지에 의해 연구에 참여할지를 결정하실 수 있으며, 연구 기간 도중 어느 때에나 벌금 등의 불이익 없이 참여를 그만둘 수 있습니다.

그룹토론에 학부모님께서도 함께 하실 수 없으며 자녀가 어떤 말을 했는지 알기 위해 녹음된 내용을 확인하실 수 없습니다. 이는 어린이들이 자유로운 분위기에서 솔직한 의견을 말할 수 있게 하기 위함입니다.

이 연구에 참여함으로써 얻게 되는 신체적 위험은 없습니다. 그러나 토론 중 학습만화에 관련된 좋지 않은 경험이나 다른 사람과의 갈등을 이야기할 때에 일시적으로 기분이 나빠질 수도 있습니다. 제가 어린이들에게 토론세션 중 개인의 프라이버시를 존중해달라고 부탁을 하겠지만, 세션이 끝난 후 ‘누가 어떤 말을 했는지’에 대하여 아이들끼리 이야기할 가능성은 여전히 배제할 수 없습니다. 이러한 상황을 방지하기 위해서 매 세션 시작 전에 제가 아이들에게 ‘대답하기 불편하면 하지 않아도 된다’는 것을 상기시키도록 하겠습니다.

귀 자녀가 이 연구에 참여하는 것은 전적으로 자유의지에 의한 것입니다. 학부모님의 동의 외에도, 어린이들은 이 연구에 참여하고 싶은지 아닌지 직접 질문을 받게 됩니다. 부모님의 동의가 있고, 스스로도 참여할 의사가 있는 어린이들만이 이 연구에 참여하게 되며, 언제든지 참여를 그만둘 수 있습니다. 학부모님께서도 언제든지 불이익 없이 자녀의 연구 참여에 대한 동의를 취하실 수 있습니다.

각 토론 세션은 녹음이 될 것이며 그 파일은 2년간 보관될 것입니다. 자녀의 연구 참여를 원하시는 학부모님께서도 녹음을 허락해 주셔야 합니다. 이 연구에서 얻은 자료는 철저히 보안이 유지될 것입니다. 이 자료를 바탕으로 출판되는 어떤 출판물에도 참가 어린이들의 이름을 밝히지 않을 것입니다.

이 동의서 하단에 자녀의 연구 참여 허락 여부를 기입하신 후 첫 그룹토론 세션이 시작하기 전까지 저(임여주)에게 돌려주시면 됩니다. 나머지 문서 한 부는 학부모님께 드리는 것입니다.

귀 자녀와 함께 연구를 할 수 있기를 바랍니다. 귀 자녀에게도 이 연구 참여가 즐거운 경험이 될 것이라고 생각합니다. 이 연구는 어린이들에게 학습만화에 대한 의견을 말할 수 있는 기회를 주는데, 이것은 현재 학습만화에 대한 연구들이 주 독자층인 어린이들의 목소리를 거의 반영하고 있지 않다는 점에서 특히 더 중요하다고 생각합니다. 이 연구는 현재 한국에서 특이한 현상으로

주목 받고 있는 학습만화 열풍을 자세히 다룸으로써 한국의 어린이문학과 어린이 도서관서비스의 발전에 도움이 될 것입니다. 또한 점점 더 많은 학자들이 만화라는 장르를 학문적인 측면에서 바라보고 있는 미국의 어린이문학과 어린이 도서관 분야에도 기여를 할 것입니다.

이 연구에 대해 질문사항이 있으시면 아래 연락처로 저 또는 저의 지도교수님께 연락해주시기 바랍니다. 인간관련 연구 (research involving human subject)의 참여자로서 갖는 권리에 대해 궁금하신 것이 있다면 일리노이 주립대학교 IRB 오피스 (University of Illinois Institutional Review Board Office)로 연락해 주십시오: 217.333.2670 / irb@illinois.edu. 전화를 하실 때는 자신을 연구 참여자라고 밝히시면 됩니다.

나머지 문서 한 부는 갖고 계십시오.
감사합니다.

임여주
217.419.5226
[ylim20@illinois.edu](mailto:yylim20@illinois.edu)

Christine A. Jenkins
217.244.7452
cajenkin@illinois.edu

나는 나의 자녀 _____ (자녀의 이름) 가 위에 언급된 연구에 참여하는 것을
허락합니다 / 허락하지 않습니다(둘 중 하나를 선택해주세요).

부모님의 성함 (정자로 기입해 주세요)

부모님의 서명

날짜

나는 위에 언급된 연구에서 나의 자녀 _____ (자녀의 이름) 의 대화가 녹음되는
것을 *허락합니다* / *허락하지 않습니다* (둘 중 하나를 선택해주세요).

부모님의 성함 (정자로 기입해 주세요)

부모님의 서명

날짜

APPENDIX K: PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM (BERKELEY) – ENGLISH

Participant Assent Form (Berkeley) **Educational Graphic Novels in Korean Children's Lives**

Responsible Principal Investigator: Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu)

Other Investigator: Yeo-Joo Lim ([ylim20@illinois.edu](mailto:yylim20@illinois.edu))

1. Purpose of the Study

As many of you already know, Educational Graphic Novels (EGN) have become very popular among children in Korea. This research project explores the sudden popularity of EGN, particularly how children read and understand EGN and what EGN means to them. Yeo-Joo Lim's research focuses on Korean children's thoughts about EGN. Her doctoral dissertation and other research will be based what she learns from these discussions.

2. Procedures to be followed

We plan group discussion sessions with five Korean children ages 7 to 11 years olds who have been living in the U.S. for less than a year. The group will meet at the University Village Community Center of UC Berkley. Each session will be about an hour long.

The activity in the group discussion will be as follow:

- Week 1: Free conversation about EGN
- Week 2: Discussion on *Magic Thousand Character*
- Week 3: Discussion on *Why?*
- Week 4: Discussion on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Before sessions in Week 2, 3, and 4, I will lend one book to each of you. You will read the book until the next week and we will talk about that book altogether. For example, at the end of Week 1 session, all children will be given *Magic Thousand Character* vol.1 and they will participate in a discussion about that particular title at Week 2 session.

When all four sessions are completed, you will be given the book you have read for this research as a present. (The books will be presented only when you complete all four sessions.)

Exact meeting times will be decided dependent on the schedules of the participating children. The participation of this study is voluntary and you may stop participating at anytime without any penalty.

3. Foreseeable Risks

There are no physical risks to participants in this study. However, you may feel bad when you talk about uncomfortable experiences or conflicts with other people, such as parents or teachers, about your reading EGN.

We will ask each of you to respect the privacy of our discussion session, but we cannot guarantee that one or more children won't relate 'who said what' after the session is over. In order to minimize the risks stated above, before each session we will remind you that you may refuse to answer to any questions that you would be uncomfortable answering.

4. Foreseeable Benefits

We think that our research will be enjoyable for you. In this research, you can voice your own thoughts about your experiences on EGN. Your participation will benefit the field of children's literature and library services in Korea, as well as that in the U.S.

5. Confidentiality

We won't use your names in research reports. The records from the discussion sessions will be accessed only by the researchers – Christine and Yeo-Joo.

6. Contacts and Questions

Please contact Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu) or Yeo-Joo Lim (ylim20@illinois.edu) with any questions, or concerns about the research. You may also call Christine A. Jenkins (217.244.7452) or Yeo-Joo Lim (217.419.5226) if you feel you have been injured or harmed by this research. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217.333.2670 or via email at irb@illinois.edu.

7. Statement of Assent

* You will be given a copy of this assent form for your records.

I have read and understand the above form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

(Print) Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX L: PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM (BERKELEY) – KOREAN

참가 동의서 (버클리)

한국 어린이들에게 학습만화의 의미

책임 연구자: Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu)

그 외 연구자: 임여주 (ylim20@illinois.edu)

1. 연구의 목적

여러분이 이미 알다시피 학습만화는 최근 한국에서 굉장한 인기를 끌고 있어요. 이 연구는 학습만화가 왜 그렇게 인기가 있는지, 그리고 학습만화를 가장 많이 읽는 여러분 세대에게 학습만화가 어떤 의미인지를 알고자 하는 것이에요. 이 연구에서 얻은 결과는 저의 박사학위논문과 앞으로의 연구에 자료로 쓰일 예정입니다.

2. 연구 절차

미국에서 살게 된지 1년 미만이 되는 만 7세에서 11세 (초등학교 2학년에서 6학년) 사이의 한국 어린이 다섯 명이 이 토론 그룹의 대상이에요. 이 토론 그룹은 UC Berkeley의 University Village Community Center에서 만나서 토론을 하게 되며, 각 토론 세션은 한 시간 정도 진행될 것입니다. 토론에서 나눌 이야기들은 다음과 같습니다:

- 첫째주: 학습만화에 대해 자유로운 생각 말하기
- 둘째주: ‘마법천자문’에 대한 토론
- 셋째주: ‘Why?’에 대한 토론
- 넷째주: ‘내일은 실험왕’에 대한 토론

첫 주를 제외한 각 모임의 일주일 전에 제가 여러분에게 책을 한 권씩 빌려줄 거예요. 여러분은 일주일동안 그 책을 읽고 다음 토론시간에 그 책에 대하여 토론하게 됩니다.

예를 들면, 첫 주의 토론이 끝나고 집에 가기 전에 여러분은 ‘마법천자문 1 권’을 받게 되는데, 그 책은 둘째 주 토론의 주제가 됩니다.

4 주의 그룹토론이 모두 끝나면 그동안 읽었던 학습만화책들은 모두 여러분에게 선물로 주어집니다. (4 주의 그룹 토론을 모두 마쳐야만 선물을 받을 수 있어요.)

정확한 만남 시간은 그룹 인원이 결정된 후에 각 참가자들의 스케줄을 고려해 정해질 것입니다.

이 연구에의 참여는 본인의 자유의사에 의한 것이며 어느 때에든 벌금이나 손해 없이 참여를 그만둘 수 있습니다.

3. 예상되는 위험

이 연구에 참여함으로써 얻게 되는 신체적인 위험은 없습니다. 그러나, 토론 중에 학습만화에 관련된 안 좋은 경험이나 부모님이나 선생님 등 다른 사람과의 갈등에 대해서 이야기하게 될 경우 순간적으로 기분이 나빠질 수도 있어요.

제가 여러분에게 이 그룹토론에서 나온 이야기들을 비밀로 지켜달라고 부탁할 것이지만, 그래도 혹시 참가자 중 한 두 명이 ‘누가 어떤 이야기를 했대’ 하고 말하고 다닐지도 모르고요.

그런 일이 일어날 가능성을 최소한으로 줄이기 위해서, 매번 토론을 시작하기 전에 제가 여러분에게, 대답하기 곤란한 질문이 있으면 대답하지 않아도 된다는 것을 상기시켜줄게요.

4. 예상되는 이로움

이 연구는 여러분에게 즐거운 경험이 될 거예요. 여러분은 이 연구를 통해서 학습만화에 관한 자신의 경험이나 의견을 이야기할 수 있는 기회를 갖게 됩니다. 여러분의 참여는 한국과 미국의 어린이문학과 어린이 도서관 서비스 발전에 기여할 것입니다.

5. 보안

제가 이 연구를 발표할 때 여러분의 이름은 공개되지 않을 거예요. 이 그룹토론에서 나온 자료는 저와 제 지도선생님 외에는 아무도 볼 수 없으니 안심하셔도 돼요.

6. 질문과 연락처

이 연구에 관해 질문이나 더 알고 싶은 것이 있으시면 Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu)나 임여주(ylin20@illinois.edu)에게 연락 주세요. 이 연구로 인해 다치거나 해를 입었을 경우에도 연락해 주세요. 전화는 Christine A. Jenkins 217.244.7452, 임여주 217.419.5226 입니다. 이 연구의 참여자로서 갖는 권리에 대해 궁금하신 것이 있다면 University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (217.333.2670; irb@illinois.edu)로 연락하시면 됩니다.

7. 동의서

* 이 문서를 한 장 더 복사해서 여러분께 줄 거예요.

나는 위 동의서를 읽고 이해하였으며 나의 자유의사로 이 연구에 참여합니다.

(정자필기) 참가자의 이름

참가자의 서명

날짜

APPENDIX M: PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM (WALNUT CREEK) – ENGLISH

Participant Assent Form (Walnut Creek) Educational Graphic Novels in Korean Children's Lives

Responsible Principal Investigator: Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu)

Other Investigator: Yeo-Joo Lim (ylim20@illinois.edu)

1. Purpose of the Study

As many of you already know, Educational Graphic Novels (EGN) have become very popular among children in Korea. This research project explores the sudden popularity of EGN, particularly how children read and understand EGN and what EGN means to them. Yeo-Joo Lim's research focuses on Korean children's thoughts about EGN. Her doctoral dissertation and other research will be based what she learns from these discussions.

2. Procedures to be followed

We plan group discussion sessions with five Korean children ages 7 to 11 years olds who have been living in the U.S. for less than a year. The group will meet at the Lafayette Public Library. Each session will be about an hour long.

The activity in the group discussion will be as follow:

- Week 1: Free conversation about EGN
- Week 2: Discussion on *Magic Thousand Character*
- Week 3: Discussion on *Why?*
- Week 4: Discussion on *Tomorrow's King of Experiment*

Before sessions in Week 2, 3, and 4, I will lend one book to each of you. You will read the book until the next week and we will talk about that book altogether. For example, at the end of Week 1 session, all children will be given *Magic Thousand Character* vol.1 and they will participate in a discussion about that particular title at Week 2 session.

When all four sessions are completed, you will be given the book you have read for this research as a present. (The books will be presented only when you complete all four sessions.)

Exact meeting times will be decided dependent on the schedules of the participating children. The participation of this study is voluntary and you may stop participating at anytime without any penalty.

3. Foreseeable Risks

There are no physical risks to participants in this study. However, you may feel bad when you talk about uncomfortable experiences or conflicts with other people, such as parents or teachers, about your reading EGN.

We will ask each of you to respect the privacy of our discussion session, but we cannot guarantee that one or more children won't relate 'who said what' after the session is over. In order to minimize the risks stated above, before each session we will remind you that you may refuse to answer to any questions that you would be uncomfortable answering.

4. Foreseeable Benefits

We think that our research will be enjoyable for you. In this research, you can voice your own thoughts about your experiences on EGN. Your participation will benefit the field of children's literature and library services in Korea, as well as that in the U.S.

5. Confidentiality

We won't use your names in research reports. The records from the discussion sessions will be accessed only by the researchers – Christine and Yeo-Joo.

6. Contacts and Questions

Please contact Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu) or Yeo-Joo Lim (ylim20@illinois.edu) with any questions, or concerns about the research. You may also call Christine A. Jenkins (217.244.7452) or Yeo-Joo Lim (217.419.5226) if you feel you have been injured or harmed by this research. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217.333.2670 or via email at irb@illinois.edu.

7. Statement of Assent

* You will be given a copy of this assent form for your records.

I have read and understand the above form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

(Print) Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX N: PARTICIPANT ASSENT FORM (WALNUT CREEK) - KOREAN

참가 동의서 (월넛크릭)

한국 어린이들에게 학습만화의 의미

책임 연구자: Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu)

그 외 연구자: 임여주 (ylim20@illinois.edu)

1. 연구의 목적

여러분이 이미 알다시피 학습만화는 최근 한국에서 굉장한 인기를 끌고 있어요. 이 연구는 학습만화가 왜 그렇게 인기가 있는지, 그리고 학습만화를 가장 많이 읽는 여러분 세대에게 학습만화가 어떤 의미인지를 알고자 하는 것이에요. 이 연구에서 얻은 결과는 저의 박사학위논문과 앞으로의 연구에 자료로 쓰일 예정입니다.

2. 연구 절차

미국에서 살게 된지 1년 미만이 되는 만 7세에서 11세 (초등학교 2학년에서 6학년) 사이의 한국 어린이 다섯 명이 이 토론 그룹의 대상이에요. 이 토론 그룹은 Lafayette Public Library에서 만나서 토론을 하게 되며, 각 토론 세션은 한 시간 정도 진행될 것입니다. 토론에서 나눌 이야기들은 다음과 같습니다:

- 첫째주: 학습만화에 대해 자유로운 생각 말하기
- 둘째주: ‘마법천자문’에 대한 토론
- 셋째주: ‘Why?’에 대한 토론
- 넷째주: ‘내일은 실험왕’에 대한 토론

첫 주를 제외한 각 모임의 일주일 전에 제가 여러분에게 책을 한 권씩 빌려줄 거예요. 여러분은 일주일동안 그 책을 읽고 다음 토론시간에 그 책에 대하여 토론하게 됩니다.

예를 들면, 첫 주의 토론이 끝나고 집에 가기 전에 여러분은 ‘마법천자문 1 권’을 받게 되는데, 그 책은 둘째 주 토론의 주제가 됩니다.

4 주의 그룹토론이 모두 끝나면 그동안 읽었던 학습만화책들은 모두 여러분에게 선물로 주어집니다. (4 주의 그룹 토론을 모두 마쳐야만 선물을 받을 수 있어요.)

정확한 만남 시간은 그룹 인원이 결정된 후에 각 참가자들의 스케줄을 고려해 정해질 것입니다.

이 연구에의 참여는 본인의 자유의사에 의한 것이며 어느 때에든 벌금이나 손해 없이 참여를 그만둘 수 있습니다.

3. 예상되는 위험

이 연구에 참여함으로써 얻게 되는 신체적인 위험은 없습니다. 그러나, 토론 중에 학습만화에 관련된 안 좋은 경험이나 부모님이나 선생님 등 다른 사람과의 갈등에 대해서 이야기하게 될 경우 순간적으로 기분이 나빠질 수도 있어요.

제가 여러분에게 이 그룹토론에서 나온 이야기들을 비밀로 지켜달라고 부탁할 것이지만, 그래도 혹시 참가자 중 한 두 명이 ‘누가 어떤 이야기를 했대’ 하고 말하고 다닐지도 모르고요.

그런 일이 일어날 가능성을 최소한으로 줄이기 위해서, 매번 토론을 시작하기 전에 제가 여러분에게, 대답하기 곤란한 질문이 있으면 대답하지 않아도 된다는 것을 상기시켜줄게요.

4. 예상되는 이로움

이 연구는 여러분에게 즐거운 경험이 될 거예요. 여러분은 이 연구를 통해서 학습만화에 관한 자신의 경험이나 의견을 이야기할 수 있는 기회를 갖게 됩니다. 여러분의 참여는 한국과 미국의 어린이문학과 어린이 도서관 서비스 발전에 기여할 것입니다.

5. 보안

제가 이 연구를 발표할 때 여러분의 이름은 공개되지 않을 거예요. 이 그룹토론에서 나온 자료는 저와 제 지도선생님 외에는 아무도 볼 수 없으니 안심하셔도 돼요.

6. 질문과 연락처

이 연구에 관해 질문이나 더 알고 싶은 것이 있으시면 Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu)나 임여주(ylin20@illinois.edu)에게 연락 주세요. 이 연구로 인해 다치거나 해를 입었을 경우에도 연락해 주세요. 전화는 Christine A. Jenkins 217.244.7452, 임여주 217.419.5226 입니다. 이 연구의 참여자로서 갖는 권리에 대해 궁금하신 것이 있다면 University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (217.333.2670; irb@illinois.edu)로 연락하시면 됩니다.

7. 동의서

* 이 문서를 한 장 더 복사해서 여러분께 줄 거예요.

나는 위 동의서를 읽고 이해하였으며 나의 자유의사로 이 연구에 참여합니다.

(정자필기) 참가자의 이름

참가자의 서명

날짜

APPENDIX O: RECRUITING MESSAGE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS – ENGLISH

Hello.

My name is Yeo-Joo Lim.

I am a doctoral student in Graduate School of Library and Information Science at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

I am conducting a research about Educational Graphic Novels in Korea. As you may already know, EGN became extraordinarily popular among children in Korea in recently. My research explores the sudden popularity of EGN, and interviews with school teachers, school librarians, and public librarians in Korea who work with children are very important for my research. I hope I could hear your opinion on the EGN phenomenon and any interesting experience you have regarding EGN during your work with children.

You've been chosen because you have been working with children ages eight to eleven for more than one year. If you are willing, I would like to interview you via phone about your opinions about EGN and children's reading of them. If you are willing but a phone interview is impossible for you, then I will send you an email survey with the same question. At the interview, I will ask you some general and some specific questions regarding EGN and children, and you can tell me freely about your opinion on them. The phone interview will be about an hour long. If you would prefer an email, the email interview may include more than one feedback from me – i.e., asking for more detailed explanation about a particular topic that you answered.

Your participation is valuable for my research, which will further contribute to the development of children's literature and library services for children in Korea.

If you are interested, please contact:

Yeo Joo Lim

ylim20@illinois.edu

1-217-419-5226 (U.S.)

1-217-419-6067 (U.S.)

APPENDIX P: RECRUITING MESSAGE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS – KOREAN

안녕하세요. 저는 미국 일리노이 주립대학교 (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) 문헌정보학과에 재학중인 임여주라고 합니다.

저는 최근 한국에서 선풍적인 인기를 끌고 있는 학습만화에 대한 연구를 하고 있습니다. 특히 아이들과 함께 일하시는 학교 선생님들, 학교 사서 선생님들, 그리고 공공도서관 사서님들과의 인터뷰에 큰 비중을 두고 학습만화의 인기 요인에 알아보고자 합니다. 선생님/사서님께서 학습만화에 대해 갖고 계신 생각과 학습만화에 얹힌 아이들과의 재미있는 사연을 듣고 싶습니다.

선생님/사서님께서 초등학교 3 학년에서 6 학년까지의 아이들과 일한 경력이 있으시고 현재도 그 나이의 아이들과 일하고 계시기 때문에 이 연구에 참여를 부탁드립니다.

선생님/사서님께서 괜찮으시다면 전화 인터뷰를 통해서 선생님/사서님께서 학습만화에 대해서, 그리고 아이들이 학습만화를 읽는 것에 대해서 어떻게 생각하시는지 듣고 싶습니다. 그러나 만일 전화 인터뷰가 힘들시다면, 이메일을 통해 (전화 인터뷰에서와) 같은 질문을 여쭙어 보겠습니다. 제가 개략적인 질문을 몇 개 드릴 건데요, 그 질문을 바탕으로 자유롭게 말씀해주시면 됩니다. 전화 인터뷰는 약 한 시간 정도 소요될 예정입니다. 이메일 인터뷰의 경우 제가 더 구체적인 대답을 듣고 싶은 몇 가지 토픽에 대해서 몇 번 더 질문 이메일을 드릴 수도 있습니다.

선생님/사서님의 참여가 저의 연구에 큰 도움이 됩니다. 또한, 이 연구가 한국의 어린이 문학과 어린이 도서관 서비스의 발전에 기여하리라고 믿습니다.

참여 의사가 있으시면 저에게 연락해 주세요.

감사합니다.

임여주 올림

ylim20@illinois.edu

1-217-419-5226 (미국)

1-217-419-6067 (미국)

**APPENDIX Q: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS) –
ENGLISH**

**Participant Consent Form
Educational Graphic Novels in Korean Children's Lives**

Responsible Principal Investigator: Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu)

Other Investigator: Yeo-Joo Lim (ylim20@illinois.edu)

1. Purpose of the Study

As you already know, Educational Graphic Novels became extraordinarily popular among children in Korea recently. This research project explores the sudden popularity of EGN, particularly the views from teachers and librarians who work with children everyday. This research will be disseminated through a doctoral dissertation paper. It may also be used in subsequent research projects.

2. Procedures to be followed

We plan interviews with elementary school teachers, school librarians, and public librarians who work in the children's rooms. The interviews will be conducted by email or phone, depending on the participant's preference. The phone interview will be about an hour long, and the email interview may include more than one feedback from the researcher – i.e., asking for more detailed explanation about a particular topic that you answered. The interview will be conducted at a time convenient to you.

The participation of this study is voluntary and you may discontinue at anytime without any penalty or loss of benefits.

The phone interview will be audio-recorded with your permission. Please check one of the boxes below:

I give permission for my interview to be audio recorded (if done over the phone)

_____ YES _____ NO

3. Foreseeable Risks

There are no physical risks to participants in this study. However, you may feel temporary emotional distress if you discuss uncomfortable experiences or conflicts with other people regarding Educational Graphic Novels. In order to minimize these risks, you can terminate the interview at any time and also skip questions you prefer not to answer.

4. Foreseeable Benefits

We think that our research will be enjoyable for you. This research will give you opportunity to voice your own opinions regarding your experiences on Educational Graphic Novels. Your participation will benefit the field of children's literature and library services in Korea, as well as that in the U.S.

5. Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. If any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

6. Contacts and Questions

Please contact Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu) or Yeo-Joo Lim ([ylim20@illinois.edu](mailto:yylim20@illinois.edu)) with any questions, or concerns about the research. You may also call Christine A. Jenkins (217.244.7452) or Yeo-Joo Lim (217.419.5226) if you feel you have been injured or harmed by this research. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217.333.2670 by collect call or via email at irb@illinois.edu.

7. Statement of Consent

* Please mark “x” on one of the statements below and send this file back to Yeo-Joo Lim.

☐ I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

☐ I decline to participate in this study.

Name of the Participant

Date

**APPENDIX R: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS) –
KOREAN**

**참가 동의서
한국 어린이들에게 학습만화의 의미**

책임 연구자: Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu)

그 외 연구자: 임여주 (yilm20@illinois.edu)

1. 연구의 목적

여러분들이 이미 아시다시피 학습만화는 최근 한국에서 굉장한 인기를 끌고 있습니다. 이 연구에서는 학습만화의 이 같은 폭발적인 인기를, 특별히 어린이들과 매일 생활하시는 선생님들과 사서님들의 시각에서 보고자 합니다. 이 연구의 결과는 박사논문에 포함될 예정입니다, 향후 연구의 자료로도 쓰일 수 있습니다.

2. 연구 절차

초등학교 선생님들, 초등학교 사서 선생님들, 공공도서관 어린이실의 사서님들을 대상으로 인터뷰를 계획하고 있습니다. 인터뷰는 이메일이나 전화 중 참가자께서 선호하시는 방법으로 진행될 것입니다. 전화 인터뷰는 한 시간 가량 소요될 예정이며, 이메일 인터뷰의 경우 더욱 자세한 설명을 위해 몇 번의 피드백이 오갈 수 있습니다. 인터뷰는 참가자께서 편하신 시간에 진행될 것입니다.

이 연구에의 참여는 본인의 자유의사에 의한 것이며 어느 때에든 별금이나 손해 없이 참여를 그만둘 수 있습니다.

선생님께서 허락하신다면 전화 인터뷰를 녹음할 예정입니다. 아래 문장을 읽어보시고 두 항목 중 하나에 체크해주십시오.

(전화 인터뷰를 할 경우) 나는 내 인터뷰가 녹음되는 것을 허락합니다.

_____ 예 _____ 아니오

3. 예상되는 위험

이 연구에 참여함으로써 얻게 되는 신체적인 위험은 없습니다. 그러나, 토론 중에 학습만화에 관련된 안 좋은 경험이나 다른 사람과의 갈등에 대해서 이야기하게 될 경우 순간적으로 기분이 나빠질 수도 있습니다. 이러한 위험을 최소화하기 위하여, 선생님과 사서님들께서는 언제든지 인터뷰를 중단하실 수 있으며 대답하고 싶지 않은 질문은 그냥 넘어가실 수 있습니다.

4. 예상되는 이로움

이 연구는 선생님과 사서님들께 즐거운 경험이 될 것입니다. 이 기회를 통하여 학습만화에 대해 갖고 있던 생각이나 경험들을 이야기하실 수 있습니다. 여러분의 참여는 한국과 미국의 어린이문학과 어린이 도서관 서비스 발전에 기여할 것입니다.

5. 보안

이 연구에서 얻은 자료는 비공개로 보관될 것입니다. 만일 이 연구 결과를 발표할 경우에는 연구 참여자의 신상정보가 드러날만한 정보는 절대로 포함하지 않을 것입니다. 연구 결과의 자료는 안전하게 보관될 것이며 오직 연구자만이 그 자료를 볼 수 있습니다.

6. 질문과 연락처

이 연구에 관해 질문이나 더 알고 싶은 것이 있으시면 Christine A. Jenkins (cajenkin@illinois.edu)나 임여주(yilm20@illinois.edu)에게 연락 주십시오. 이 연구로 인해 다치거나 해를 입었을 경우에도 연락해 주십시오. 전화는 Christine A. Jenkins 217.244.7452,

임여주 217.419.5226 입니다. 이 연구의 참여자로서 갖는 권리에 대해 궁금하신 것이 있다면 University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (217.333.2670; irb@illinois.edu)로 연락하시기 바랍니다.

7. 연구 참가 동의서

* 아래의 두 문장 중 한 곳에 “x”표시를 하신 후 이 파일을 저에게 이메일로 보내주십시오.

__ 나는 위 동의서를 읽고 이해하였으며 나의 자유의사로 이 연구에 참여합니다.

__ 나는 이 연구에의 참여를 거절합니다.

참가자의 이름

날짜

**APPENDIX S: LETTER OF PERMISSION (CRAYON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL) –
ENGLISH**

**Asking for a permission to conduct an observation research
at Crayon Elementary School**

Hello.

I am Yeo-Joo Lim from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois. I am writing a doctoral dissertation under guidance of Dr. Christine Jenkins.

My dissertation topic is Educational Graphic Novels in Korean Children's Lives. As you already know, Educational Graphic Novels became extraordinarily popular among children in Korea recently. My research explores the sudden popularity of EGNs, particularly the use and meaning of EGNs to the actual readers – children themselves.

My research attempts to investigate children's behavior in relation to EGNs through observation on children's reading at a classroom at an elementary school and at an elementary school library. In order to do this, I want to get your permission to conduct the observation research at your school. I will sit in an unobtrusive location to observe. I will sit in the back corner of a classroom and in the corner of the school library and observe only the titles of the books children read and/or check out. Information about the children – including their names – will not be recorded in my field notes or in my dissertation. Your school name will not be presented in my dissertation either. (For example, it will be written as 'At an elementary school that is located in Ilsan area, a 4th grader (girl) read <Why: Universe (vol.1)> during lunch time.

I hope to conduct a classroom observation at Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom. I plan to visit the classroom three times to observe: I plan to observe students for 30 minutes during morning reading time on the first visit, 30 minutes during lunch time on the second visit, and 30 minutes during morning reading time on the third visit. I plan to visit the school library three times as well: I plan to observe students for 30 minutes during lunch time on the first visit, 30 minutes

after school on the second visit, and 30 minutes during lunch time on the third visit. I will observe the type of books children choose to read or to check out – I will look at the titles of the books.

I look forward to conducting a research at your school. This research will benefit the field of children's literature and library services in Korea in that it will offer thorough investigation on Educational Graphic Novels, which stand out as a phenomenon in recent Korean society.

If you would like to give me permission to conduct an observation research at your school, please sign in the space at the bottom of this letter. (Please keep the attached copy of this letter for your records. ☺)

If you have any questions about this research, please contact my advisor or me using the information below.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Yeo-Joo Lim
217.419.5226
[ylim20@illinois.edu](mailto:yylim20@illinois.edu)

Christine A. Jenkins
217.244.7452
[cajenkin@illinois.edu](mailto:cjenkin@illinois.edu)

I give permission for Yeo-Joo Lim to conduct a research project described above at Crayon Elementary School.

(Print) Name of the Principal

Signature of the Principal

Date

**APPENDIX T: LETTER OF PERMISSION (CRAYON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL) –
KOREAN**

CRAYON 초등학교 교장선생님께

안녕하세요.

저는 미국 일리노이 주립 대학교 (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) 문헌정보학과 박사과정에 재학중인 임여주라고 합니다. 지도교수님이신 크리스틴 켄킨스 박사 (Dr. Christine Jenkins) 의 지도 아래에 박사 논문을 쓰고 있습니다.

저의 논문 주제는 ‘한국 어린이들의 학습만화 읽기’ 입니다. 최근 한국에서 폭발적인 인기를 누리고 있는 학습만화의 인기 요인을 분석하고, 특히 학습만화의 주 독자층인 어린이들에게 학습만화가 어떤 의미인지를 중점적으로 알아보려는 목적으로 연구를 진행하고 있습니다.

연구의 일환으로 초등학생들이 실제로 학급과 학교도서관에서 어떠한 독서 행태를 보이는지를 관찰하려고 하며, 이를 위해 CRAYON 초등학교 교장선생님의 허락을 받고자 합니다.

관찰은 최대한 아이들에게 방해가 되지 않는 선에서 진행될 것입니다. 저는 교실 뒤의 한 구석, 그리고 학교도서관의 한 구석에 앉아서, 자유시간에 아이들이 책을 읽는지, 읽는다면 어떤 책을 읽는지만을 확인할 것입니다. 아이들의 이름을 포함한 신상정보는 박사논문은 물론 저의 연구노트에도 기록되지 않을 것입니다. 학교 이름 또한 논문에 언급되지 않을 것입니다.

(예를 들면, ‘일산지역에 위치한 학교 A 의 4 학년 여자 어린이, 점심시간에 <Why:우주>편을 읽다’ 정도로만 기록할 것입니다.)

학급에서의 관찰은 4 학년 B 선생님반에서 하고자 합니다. 총 세 번을 방문하여 첫날은 아침 자율학습 시간 30 분동안, 둘째날은 점심시간 30 분동안, 그리고 셋째날은 다시 아침 자율학습 시간 30 분동안 교실 뒤에 조용히 앉아 아이들이 읽는 책 제목만 확인하겠습니다.

학교도서관 또한 총 세 번을 방문하여 첫날은 점심시간 30 분동안, 둘째날은 방과후 30 분동안, 그리고 셋째날은 다시 점심시간 30 분동안 도서관 구석에 앉아 아이들이 어떤 책을 읽거나 대출하는지, 책 제목을 관찰하겠습니다.

귀 학교에서 연구를 할 수 있기를 바랍니다. 이 연구는 현재 한국에서 독특한 현상으로 주목받고 있는 학습만화 열풍을 자세히 다룸으로써 한국의 어린이문학과 어린이도서관서비스의 발전에 도움이 될 것입니다.

제가 CRAYON 초등학교에서 관찰연구를 진행할 수 있도록 허락해주신다면 이 문서의 하단에 서명을 해주시면 됩니다. (한 부만 서명을 해주시고 나머지 한 부는 교장선생님께서 갖고 계시면 됩니다.)

혹시 이 연구에 대해 질문사항이 있으시면 아래 연락처로 저 또는 저의 지도교수님께 연락해주시기 바랍니다.

감사합니다.

임여주 올림.

임여주

1.217.419.5226

ylim20@illinois.edu

Christine A. Jenkins

1.217.244.7452

cajenkin@illinois.edu

나는 임여주씨가 CRAYON 초등학교에서 위에 언급된 연구를 진행하는 것을 허락합니다.

교장선생님의 성함 (정자로 기입해 주세요)

교장선생님의 서명

날짜

APPENDIX U: LETTER OF PERMISSION (TIMBER PUBLIC LIBRARY) – ENGLISH

Asking for a permission to conduct an observation research at Timber Public Library

Hello.

I am Yeo-Joo Lim from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois. I am writing a doctoral dissertation under guidance of Dr. Christine Jenkins.

My dissertation topic is Educational Graphic Novels in Korean Children's Lives. As you already know, Educational Graphic Novels became extraordinarily popular among children in Korea recently. My research explores the sudden popularity of EGNs, particularly the use and meaning of EGNs to the actual readers – children themselves.

My research attempts to investigate children's behavior in relation to EGNs through observation on children's reading at a public library. In order to do this, I want to get your permission to conduct the observation research at your library. I will sit in an unobtrusive location to observe. I will sit in the corner of the children's library and observe only the titles of the books children read and/or check out. Information about the children – including their names – will not be recorded in my field notes or in my dissertation. Your library name will not be presented in my dissertation either. (For example, it will be written as 'At a public library that is located in Ilisan area, an elementary school girl checked out <Why: Universe (vol.1)>.

I plan to visit Timber Public Library three times to observe. Each observation will take 30 minutes. I will observe the type of books children choose to read or to check out – I will look at the titles of the books.

I look forward to conducting a research at your library. This research will benefit the field of children's literature and library services in Korea in that it will offer thorough investigation on Educational Graphic Novels, which stand out as a phenomenon in recent Korean society.

If you would like to give me permission to conduct an observation research at your library, please sign in the space at the bottom of this letter. (Please keep the attached copy of this letter for your records. ☺)

If you have any questions about this research, please contact my advisor or me using the information below.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Yeo-Joo Lim

217.419.5226

ylim20@illinois.edu

Christine A. Jenkins

217.244.7452

cajenkin@illinois.edu

I give permission for Yeo-Joo Lim to conduct a research project described above at Timber Public Library.

(Print) Name of the children's library director

Signature of the children's library director

Date

APPENDIX V: LETTER OF PERMISSION (TIMBER PUBLIC LIBRARY) - KOREAN

TIMBER 도서관 어린이실 담당자님께

안녕하세요.

저는 미국 일리노이 주립 대학교 (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) 문헌정보학과 박사과정에 재학중인 임여주라고 합니다. 지도교수님이신 크리스틴 켄킨스 박사 (Dr. Christine Jenkins) 의 지도 아래에 박사 논문을 쓰고 있습니다.

저의 논문 주제는 ‘한국 어린이들의 학습만화 읽기’ 입니다. 최근 한국에서 폭발적인 인기를 누리고 있는 학습만화의 인기 요인을 분석하고, 특히 학습만화의 주 독자층인 어린이들에게 학습만화가 어떤 의미인지를 중점적으로 알아보려는 목적으로 연구를 진행하고 있습니다.

연구의 일환으로 초등학생들이 실제로 공공도서관에서 어떠한 독서 행태를 보이는지를 관찰하려고 하며, 이를 위해 TIMBER 도서관 어린이실 담당자님의 허락을 받고자 합니다. 관찰은 최대한 아이들에게 방해가 되지 않는 선에서 진행될 것입니다. 저는 도서관 어린이실의 한 구석에 앉아서, 아이들이 어떤 책을 읽고 어떤 책을 대출하는지만을 관찰할 것입니다.

아이들의 이름을 포함한 신상정보는 박사논문은 물론 저의 연구노트에도 기록되지 않을 것입니다. 도서관의 이름 또한 논문에 언급되지 않을 것입니다. (예를 들면, ‘일산지역에 위치한 한 공공도서관에서 초등학생으로 보이는 여자 어린이, <Why:우주>편을 대출해가다’ 정도로만 기록할 것입니다.)

TIMBER 도서관 어린이실을 총 세 번 방문하여 각각 30 분동안 도서관 구석에 앉아 아이들이 어떤 책을 읽거나 대출하는지, 책 제목을 관찰하겠습니다.

귀 도서관에서 연구를 할 수 있기를 바랍니다. 이 연구는 현재 한국에서 독특한 현상으로 주목받고 있는 학습만화 열풍을 자세히 다룸으로써 한국의 어린이문학과 어린이도서관서비스의 발전에 도움이 될 것입니다.

제가 **TIMBER** 도서관 어린이실에서 관찰연구를 진행할 수 있도록 허락해주신다면 이 문서의 하단에 서명을 해주시면 됩니다. (한 부만 서명을 해주시고 나머지 한 부는 담당자님께서 갖고 계시면 됩니다. ☺)

혹시 이 연구에 대해 질문사항이 있으시면 아래 연락처로 저 또는 저의 지도교수님께 연락해주시기 바랍니다.

감사합니다.

임여주

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나는 임여주씨가 **TIMBER** 도서관 어린이실에서 위에 언급된 연구를 진행하는 것을 허락합니다.

담당자님의 성함 (정자로 기입해 주세요)

담당자님의 서명

날짜

**APPENDIX W: INFORMATION LETTER TO PARENTS OF MRS. LEE'S FOURTH
GRADE CLASSROOM AT CRAYON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – ENGLISH**

Date

Dear Parent:

We are Yeo-Joo Lim and Christine A. Jenkins from the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois. We would like to include your child, along with 32 other students in Mrs. Lee's fourth grade classroom in Crayon Elementary School, in a research project on Educational Graphic Novels in Korean Children's Lives.

As many of you already know, Educational Graphic Novels became extraordinarily popular among children in Korea recently. This research project explores the sudden popularity of EGN, particularly the use and meaning of EGN to the actual readers – children themselves. Through observation on children's reading behavior at a public school classroom, we attempt to investigate how much children are attached to reading EGNs. The researcher will sit in the back of the classroom and observe children without interacting with them. The observation date and time will be:

- August 31, 2011: 30 minutes before the official class time starts in the morning
- September 1, 2011: 30 minutes during lunch time
- September 2, 2011: 30 minutes before the official class time starts in the morning

There are no physical risks to participants in this study. However, children may feel temporary emotional distress if they feel uncomfortable being observed by a person they do not know well enough. In order to minimize the risks, the researcher will be introduced as a friendly person by the classroom teacher so that children can feel her to be comfortable with. The information that is obtained during this research project will be kept strictly confidential. Any sharing or publication of the research results will not identify any of the participants by name.

This research will benefit the field of children's literature and library services in Korea in that it will offer thorough investigation on Educational Graphic Novels, which stand out as a phenomenon in recent Korean society. It will also benefit the U.S. children's literature and library services field, which are gradually recognizing graphic novels as a medium worth researching academically.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact us using the information below. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in research involving human subjects, please feel free to contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at 217.333.2670 or irb@illinois.edu. You are welcome to call these numbers collect if you identify yourself as a research participant.

Please keep the attached copy of this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Yeo-Joo Lim
031.946.6390
[ylim20@illinois.edu](mailto:yylim20@illinois.edu)

Christine A. Jenkins
1.217.244.7452
[cajenkin@illinois.edu](mailto:cjenkin@illinois.edu)

**APPENDIX X: INFORMATION LETTER FO PARENTS OF MRS. LEE'S FOURTH
GRADE CLASSROOM AT CRAYON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – KOREAN**

CRAYON 초등학교 MRS. LEE 의 4 학년 반 학부모님께 드리는 글

날짜

학부모님께:

저희는 일리노이 주립 대학교 (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) 문헌정보학과 박사과정에 재학중인 임여주와 지도교수인 크리스틴 젠킨스입니다. 제 박사 논문의 주제인 ‘한국 어린이들의 학습만화 읽기’ 연구의 일환으로 귀 자녀를 포함하여 Crayon 초등학교 Mrs. Lee 의 4 학년 반 아이들의 독서 행태를 관찰하고자 합니다.

많은 분들이 이미 아시다시피, 학습만화는 최근 한국에서 폭발적인 인기를 누리고 있습니다. 이 연구는 학습만화의 인기 요인을 분석하고, 특히 학습만화의 주 독자층인 어린이들에게 학습만화가 어떤 의미인지를 중점적으로 알아보려는 목적을 갖고 있습니다. 연구자는 교실의 뒷쪽에 앉아있을 것이며 어린이들과 직접 대화를 나누지는 않을 것입니다. 관찰 일시는 다음과 같습니다:

- 2011 년 8 월 31 일: 공식적인 아침수업 시작 전 30 분
- 2011 년 9 월 1 일: 점심시간 중 30 분
- 2011 년 9 월 2 일: 공식적인 아침수업 시작 전 30 분

이 연구에 참여함으로써 얻게 되는 신체적 위험은 없습니다. 그러나 낯선 사람이 쳐다보는 것을 불편해하는 아이들은 잠시 거북해할 수도 있습니다. 이런 일을 미연에 방지하고 최소화하기 위하여 담임선생님께 연구자를 친절한 사람으로 소개해주시도록 부탁드립니다. 그러면 아이들이 연구자를 좀 편하게 생각할 수 있을 것입니다.

이 연구에서 얻은 자료는 철저히 보안이 유지될 것입니다. 이 자료를 바탕으로 출판되는 어떤 출판물에도 참가 어린이들의 이름을 밝히지 않을 것입니다.

이 연구는 현재 한국에서 특이한 현상으로 주목 받고 있는 학습만화 열풍을 자세히 다룸으로써 한국의 어린이문학과 어린이 도서관서비스의 발전에 도움이 될 것입니다. 또한 점점 더 많은 학자들이 만화라는 장르를 학문적인 측면에서 바라보고 있는 미국의 어린이문학과 어린이 도서관 분야에도 기여를 할 것입니다.

이 연구에 대해 질문사항이 있으시면 아래 연락처로 저 또는 저의 지도교수님께 연락해주시기 바랍니다. 인간관련 연구 (research involving human subject)의 참여자로서 갖는 권리에 대해 궁금하신 것이 있다면 일리노이 주립대학교 IRB 오피스 (University of Illinois Institutional Review Board Office)로 연락해 주십시오: 217.333.2670 / irb@illinois.edu. 전화를 하실 때는 자신을 연구 참여자라고 밝히시면 됩니다.

임여주
031.946.6390
ylin20@illinois.edu

Christine A. Jenkins
1.217.244.7452
cajenkin@illinois.edu

APPENDIX Y: LIST OF PSEUDONYMS USED IN THIS RESEARCH

The Focus Group Participants

Group	Name	Grade (in U.S. school)	Age	Gender
I	Jae-Hee	4	8	Boy
	Yoo-Bin	4	8	Girl
	Yoon-Ho	5	9	Boy
	Dong-Hoon	6	10	Boy
	Joo-Young	6	11	Boy
II	Sung-Min	2	7	Boy
	Joon-Ha	2	7	Boy
	Ha-Yoon	3	8	Girl
	Soo-Min	5	10	Girl
	Hee-Joon	6	11	Boy
III	Jee-Won	2	7	Girl
	Min-Suh	4	9	Girl
	Joo-Hee	4	9	Girl
	Yoo-Jin	4	9	Girl

The Observation Locations

- Timber Public Library
- Crayon Elementary School: School Library
- Crayon Elementary School: Mrs. Lee's Fourth Grade Classroom

The Interview Participants (Teachers and Librarians)

	Nickname	Work Experience with Children	Student/Library Patrons' Social Class ²⁵⁹	Gender
Elementary School Teachers	Ms. Yoon	10 years	Upper middle	Female
	Mrs. Lee	16 years	Middle	Female
	Mrs. Han	6 years	Lower middle	Female
	Mrs. Shin	5 years	Lower	Female
School Librarians	Ms. Jeong	4 years	Upper middle	Female
	Ms. Choi	9 years	Lower middle	Female
	Ms. Kim	9 years	Lower middle	Female
	Ms. Song	5 years	Lower middle	Female
	Ms. Moon	3 ½ years	N/A	Female
Public Librarian	Mrs. Park	17 years	Lower middle	Female

²⁵⁹ This classification of social class is based on sociologists William Thompson and Joseph Hickey's definition on social classes in 2005. According to Thompson and Hickey, the upper middle class refers to "[p]rofessionals with a graduate degree" and "make \$72,500 to \$100,000"; the lower middle class "has a bachelor's degree" and "works in professional support and sales, and makes between \$32,000 and \$50,000"; the lower class "has a high school education, makes \$7,000 a year, and is either unemployed or works only part-time" (Denby & Welch, 2009, p. 193).